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KASHMIR

The Switzerland of India

by:

DERMOT NORRIS

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ABOUT THE BOOK

In the past, the natural beauties, the glorious climate and other attractions of the Kashmir Valley have been so much appreciated that the new-comer is apt to picture to himself a paradise on the earth. Dermot Norris's present study titled Kashmir : The Switzerland of India verily puts forth the Valley of Kashmir. Its a descriptive guide that covers very comprehensively the different aspects of the Valley in five separate chapters. The climate of the Kashmir Valley and its inhabitants, their way of living ; Srinagar—The Dal lake and Mughal Gardens, Gulmarg ; Over the Zoji La pass ; ski-ing in winter, spring and summer ; game shooting and fishing etc. are some of the major issues dealt with in the present book The appendices are very helpful that incorporate visitor's Rules and Regulations. The book is richly illustrated with fourteen illustrations in black-n- white. Its is a compendium to be necesserily possessed by every one evening interest in Kashmir.

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KASHMIR

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction—The Climate and Seasons—The People of Kashmir—The History of the Valley—The Way There—House-Boats—Caveat Emptor.

§ 1.

Introduction, The Climate and Seasons.

THE natural beauties, the glorious climate and other attractions of the Kashmir valley have received such extravagant praise in the past that the new-comer is apt to picture to himself a Paradise on earth. Too much should not be expected: the country has an immense amount to offer in charm and interest and amusements, but, as in other countries, cold and rainy days occur, and there are places within its confines that have little natural beauty and no charm at all.

The climate of Kashmir is as unlike that of the plains of India as possible, and is excellently suited to Europeans,

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either in health, when there is an enormous variety of out-door attractions, or during convalescence. Spring and autumn are entirely delightful, but during July and August the valley itself is too hot to be pleasant, while January and February are usually cold and damp.

Arriving at the New Year, the visitor will very probably find the whole valley covered with a few inches of snow. Days of sleet and storm will alternate with longer periods of fair weather. On most nights the thermometer will drop below freezing point and a good deal of skating on ponds, or the remains of summer floods, will be obtainable, while in really cold spells the Dal lake is sometimes safe. The weather in February is much the same as in the preceding month, but by the middle of March the spring sets in with a suddenness and determination that is quite unlike the hesitating approach which it makes in the British Isles, and in the space of a few days the willow trees begin to show a tinge of delicate green and some of the hardiest wild flowers burst into blossom. In the gardens of the European residents snowdrops, yellow crocuses and daffodils make a first splash of colour, and are a reminder of the glories of the past summer and of the beauty that is to come.

April, which lives up to its showery reputation, and during which the days are still quite cool, sees the valley perhaps at its best. The spring is fully established; every tree and shrub has covered itself with new green leaves, and almond, apricot, peach and early apple blossom cover large areas on the outskirts of Srinagar with clouds of white and pale-pink loveliness.

May is distinctly warmer, but, even in the middle of the day, the heat is by no means oppressive and the chenar trees, which are one of the chief glories of Kashmir, are a magnificent sight in all their fresh new foliage.

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Along the river banks drooping willows and graceful slender poplars make a cool and shady setting for the rows of moored house-boats, which by this time are rapidly filling with visitors, and the Golden Oriole, with its brilliant colouring, the friendly, cheeky Bulbuls, busy with domestic cares, and the slender, sinuous grace of the Paradise Fly-catcher all combine to tell us that summer has arrived. During this month roses and sweet peas, both of which grow to perfection, are among the chief glories of the garden, and on the outskirts of every village masses of mauve iris add to the beauty of the country-side.

With the advent of June the weather gets rather too hot to be pleasant during the middle of the day and the majority of the visitors move up to Gulmarg, or take a camp to the cooler uplands of Gurais, the Lolab, or the Sind valley. Apart from the increased temperature the valley loses some of its attraction, as the foliage has lost its first freshness and hangs in heavy masses of a darker green. Fruits come into season now; strawberries arrive first, followed soon after by mulberries, cherries, apricots, raspberries, and later by pears and apples.

In July and August the valley is definitely hot and oppressive and few Europeans remain voluntarily in Srinagar. But visits should be made to the Dal and Manasbal lakes to see the famous Lotus Lily, which is then blossoming in all its glory.

September marks the beginning of the autumn, and, as the month wears on, the evenings grow chill and the days cool. The weather from now until Xmas is almost invariably fine and clear, and autumn, with its russet tints and the rich colouring of the chenars, framed against the distant mountains of the Pir Panjal, which once again have been

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capped with white by the first falls of snow, closely rivals, if it does not exceed, the glories of the springtime.

These are the seasons of the year in the valley. But its confines are so small that a day's journey, even in the height of summer, is sufficient to effect a change to the climate of early spring, and allows the traveller to pitch his camp on some upland marg, where the wind blows cold and pure from the snow-fields and Alpine flowers star the scanty turf. The mildest winters are severe in the valleys a thousand feet above Srinagar.

The European visitor will find Kashmir delightful, not only because of its pleasant climate, but also for the variety of amusements that it has to offer. If he is an artist, there is work for his brush at every turn. There is no day in the year on which the sportsman will not be able to amuse himself. The botanist has ranges of upland hill-sides, which are studded with scores of varieties of wild-flowers for five months of every year. For the ordinary individual there are excellent golf courses and tennis courts in Srinagar and Gulmarg, there is the Dal lake in which to bathe and on the bosom of which to flirt, and there is the Club and Nedou's Hotel in which to dance and entertain. But all these things are summer joys, and, when the wind blows cold from the mountains and the leaves begin to fall, the visitors depart, the butterflies disappear, and only a handful of residents remain.

In the winter life in Srinagar is much like that of a small English village, and there is little in the way of amusement other than the individual can supply for himself. But during these quiet winter months the valley exercises an indefinable charm, and it is with not unmixed relief that the residents, who live there throughout the year, watch the lengthening of the days and mark the arrival of the first of

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the visitors, whose numbers during the height of the season reduce Srinagar and its immediate surroundings to something closely approaching the vulgar.

§ 2.

The People of Kashmir.

Kashmir, including the outlying provinces, covers a very considerable area and the inhabitants of the various districts differ enormously from each other. The sturdy, primitive hill-men of Baltistan and Ladakh are described in a later chapter, the martial Dogras of Jammu are rarely encountered by the visitor, and it is with the inhabitants of the valley itself, with whom he will first come into contact, that we now have to deal.

The temperate climate and fertile soil of the valley have not proved to its occupants the unmixed blessing that they should at first sight appear to be. For the inhabitants of the mountainous districts to the north and of the hot infertile plains that lie to the south have constantly turned envious eyes upon this lazy, pleasant land, and much of the history of Kashmir is a record of the exploits of adventurers, who have subjected the inhabitants to the tyranny of a foreign and oppressive rule.

When, therefore, we hear contemptuous remarks regarding the character of the Kashmiris and their lack of physical courage, about which there are a score of proverbs current among the more martial neighbouring races, we must remember the centuries of misrule, oppressive taxation and official bullying to which they have been subjected without any hope of redress, and without any authority to which they could appeal with the smallest hope of success.

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The little that is known regarding the remote past is, perhaps, not of great interest except to the historian, and forms no fair basis for comparison with modern conditions. But, even if we confine ourselves within the limits of the past hundred years, we find that it was not until some years after the late Maharaja began to reign that the Kashmiris have had any other than fleeting and infrequent opportunities of developing manly virtues, or any independence of outlook.

From remote until quite recent times the peasantry were systematically treated worse than the inhabitants of the capital. They were taught by long and bitter experience to consider themselves as serfs, and to regard themselves as having no rights whatever. They were left for their own use so small an allowance of the produce of their land, that they never, even in prosperous years, had more than barely sufficient with which to tide over until the following harvest. And in Srinagar itself the lower orders of society were better off only by comparison with the inhabitants of the villages.

In his interesting book, "The Valley of Kashmir", Lawrence has much to say regarding the wretched condition of the country when he began his famous work of land settlement in 1889, a mere forty-odd years ago. In it he draws an apt comparison between the condition of the Kashmir peasantry then and that of the French peasants just before the Revolution, and greatly to the advantage of the latter, who, however bad their plight, had never sunk to the same depths of hopeless degradation. In these circumstances it was not perhaps surprising that Lawrence found the people suspicious, sullen, and furtive, with every man's hand turned against his neighbour, thrift and honest labour to be almost unknown, and bands of hungry peasants roaming the valley, anxious only to

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avoid the ubiquitous tax-gatherer and to find the wherewithal for a hand-to-mouth existence.

Forty years have not been sufficient to wipe out the imprint of these past centuries, and the children of the present generation have inborn in their character many of the traits that were necessary to ensure survival up to the time of their grandfathers, but which to-day are superfluous and form a perpetual source of irritated wonder to the Westerner, more fortunate in his ancestry. Dr. Arthur Neve, who knew them as well as any man, sums them up effectively when he says* "They are as treacherous as the Pathan, without his valour; more false than the Bengali, but equally intelligent; cringing when in subjection, they are impudent when free."

Nor does nature, who presents so fair and smiling a face to the summer visitor, always treat the inhabitants kindly. From time to time disastrous fires have swept the city, which, with its wood-built houses and narrow alley-ways, presents similar opportunities for the easy spreading of an outbreak of fire to that afforded by the London of the seventeenth century. Earthquakes occasionally occur, floods, with famine in their train, have caused serious havoc and much loss of life more than once, while cholera and smallpox have decimated the people upon several occasions. These visitations, together with the grandeur of the scenery in which they live, have kept the might of natural forces before the eyes of Kashmiris and have fostered their apathetic and fatalistic attitude of mind.

Of these disasters, floods are by far the most feared to-day. Modern medical science, aided by improvements in sanitation and a gradual awakening on the part of the people to some of the more elementary principles of

* "Picturesque Kashmir"—Dr. Arthur Neve.

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hygiene, is able to keep cholera and smallpox from assuming serious epidemic form, in spite of the overcrowding that still prevails in the towns. And, now that communications are better, serious famine is a thing of the past. But all the efforts of the State engineers, aided from time to time by the advice of experts brought in from abroad, have so far failed to prevent serious floods being of almost annual occurrence. At enormous expense the gorge below Baramulla has been dredged to a greater depth to allow of the quicker outlet of flood water, spill channels have been cut above the capital, and the Bund, which is the embankment protecting Srinagar, has been raised and strengthened. Yet, in spite of all these efforts, the city and the low-lying portions of the valley are still threatened with inundation, whenever prolonged and heavy rain causes the Jhelum to rise much above its normal summer level.

We must bear these facts in mind before we begin to criticize the present-day Kashmiri, and temper the harshness of our conclusions accordingly. The inhabitants of the villages, who form the vast majority of the people, are strong physically and can carry enormous weights on their backs for long distances, merely pausing occasionally to rest their loads on the short T-shaped sticks, which they carry with them. But, according to our standards, they are arrant cowards ; their instinct, to which they give free rein, is to fawn abjectly upon anyone with any vestige of authority, and they are dirty and slovenly in their habits. On the credit side, they live exemplary domestic lives and crime among them is rare ; they have a considerable, if crude, sense of humour, and, once they are convinced that profit will accrue to them, they are capable of exerting themselves considerably.

Their whole outlook on life, however, is warped by official oppression, which still continues on a large scale

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at any rate among the petty officials, and there is no worse tyrant than one of their own people vested with a little authority over them.

In the city, the Mussalman, who forms a large majority of the population, is, as a rule, a poor imitation of his village brethren, but the Hindu Pundits are quite a different type, for they are very intelligent and quick-witted and are renowned throughout Northern India for these characteristics. As they have almost a complete monopoly of all State employment, their power in the past has been enormous and still is very considerable. According to Western standards they are unscrupulous and dishonest in their dealings and only too frequently make unjust and rapacious officials. In the past they were extremely bigotted and the social evils, which the Hindu religion so carefully fosters, were rampant in their society. But to-day, largely due to the efforts of a few devoted Englishmen, who have worked among them for many years, there are signs that some of them are becoming more modern in their ideas, and are prepared to cast aside the more harmful of the conventions which guided their forefathers in every action of their daily lives.

The Kashmiri's fashions in dress are not attractive, and at first sight this may seem odd, for they have well developed artistic tastes and there are among them talented workmen in wood and metal. It is probably originally due, like so many other things in this curious country, to the oppression under which they lived in the past. Good clothes, or even a neat appearance, would then have been construed to indicate that the wearer was in easy circumstances and would have attracted tax-gatherers as surely as honey-scented flowers attract the bee.

The single loose-sleeved garment, worn by men and women alike, which hangs in heavy folds from their

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shoulders, is nondescript in colour and formless in shape, and the greasy woollen skull-cap, which is worn on all but gala occasions, when it is replaced by the infinitely superior white puggarree, are both indescribably mean and effeminate in appearance. But so long as the Kashmiri is wedded to the use of the kangra, so long will these garments remain in general use.

During the warm summer months the men wear short tight-fitting cotton drawers, but, as soon as the weather turns at all cold, the heavy loose cloaks reappear and the kangra is brought into use. This consists of a small wicker basket lined with earthenware and filled with glowing charcoal. The Kashmiri carries it with him wherever he goes and would no more be without it than would a modern lady be without her vanity bag. When he sits, or rather squats, he places this charcoal stove beneath his cloak, which he then frills out round him on every side, and basks in its warmth amid the acrid fumes of burning charcoal. Sometimes he falls asleep unexpectedly and serious burns are frequently caused in this way, while cancer, which is believed to be induced by the hot kangra being always pressed against the same part of the body, is not uncommon.

The earlier visitors to Kashmir were full of praises for the beauty of the women, and many of them would indeed be comely enough, were they but clean, even if they do not merit the extravagant praises that have been bestowed upon them in the past. They are markedly Jewish in appearance and no more swarthy than many of the inhabitants of southern Europe, and in consequence the Kashmiris have inevitably been accused of being descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Hard work and privation soon cause whatever beauty the women of the villages may naturally be endowed with to fade, and it is

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rare to see a woman of this class of more than a moderate age without the signs of care, hard work and child-bearing deeply imprinted upon her worn features. The purdah system prevents the ladies of the country from showing themselves to the vulgar gaze.

The visitor will gain a fair idea of the hard manual work that is the lot of the women, if he will pause beside one of the numerous boats that are moored along the banks of the Jhelum, to watch the manji's wife husking the rice, which forms the chief article of their food. The daily ration is placed in a massive stone, or wooden mortar, and the pestle consists of the trunk of a sturdy young tree cut away sufficiently in the middle to allow it to be easily gripped by one hand. This is lifted to a full arm stretch above the head and is brought down with the whole weight of the body behind it. Husking rice is a daily task that takes a considerable time, and the biceps of the Kashmiri peasant woman so developed command the respect of her husband and are a powerful factor for order in the home.

§ 3.

The History of the Valley.

In prehistoric times the whole valley of Kashmir is supposed to have been covered by one enormous sheet of water, of which the Wular lake to-day is the last remaining trace. And even this is gradually drying up as the outrush of its waters at Baramulla wears away the gorge through which the Jhelum escapes from the valley towards the distant sea. At some remote date the waters of the lake, aided by supernatural forces, are supposed to have burst through the hills near Baramulla and to have forced

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a passage to the plains of the Punjab along what is now the valley of the Jhelum. After this cataclysm the lake dried out to a large extent and the valley began to assume its present form. The fresh water fossils, which have been found in many places high up on the hill-sides; the beach marks that can be clearly distinguished by the expert eye on some of the mountains that border the valley; and the curious fan-like plateaux, locally known as Karewas, which are supposed to mark the various levels of the water, all help to confirm this theory. However, these conjectures are really only of academic interest and need not detain the visitor in search of what the country has to offer to-day.

From this very remote period until the early years of the fourteenth century, Kashmir was governed by Hindu rulers, except for several comparatively short interludes, the most important of which was when the country fell into the hands of Asoka, who is supposed to have founded the city of Srinagar. Asoka also introduced Buddhism, which was at that time the most virile and wide-spread religion throughout Northern India. Later its force gradually waned and it completely died out in Kashmir many centuries ago. To-day it has its stronghold in the barren uplands of Ladakh and Tibet, where it still flourishes.

So far as we can tell from scanty records, these Hindu rulers appear, on the whole, to have been fairly just and merciful, according to the standards of the time, and during at any rate considerable portions of this long period, the country must have enjoyed a fair measure of peace and prosperity. The remains of solid stone temples, built of massive blocks of blue limestone and assigned by archæologists to dates within this period, which are still to be seen in many parts of the valley and which contrast strongly

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with the ramshackle, if picturesque, wooden buildings of the present day, could only have been built by a people who had attained to a considerable degree of prosperity, and who had enjoyed long interludes of peace and leisure in which to evolve so highly developed a culture. The country, too, must have been thickly populated, as no mere handful of people could have required, or indeed have built, the number of temples of which the ruins may still be seen, and whose survival through so many eventful centuries postulates a far larger number to have originally existed. But whether this peace, prosperity and culture spread downwards to the peasantry and humbler townsfolk is more than doubtful, and it appears only too probable that even then they were subject to the injustice and oppression, which was to be their lot under subsequent dynasties.

After Asoka the name of Lalitaditya, who flourished about 700 A.D., has been handed down as the most famous king during this long period. Much that is told of him is legendary and he may fairly be compared with our King Arthur, but it is considered fairly certain that it was in his time that the temple at Martand was built and that he extended the Kashmir sphere of influence far into Central Asia.

A hundred years later Avantivarma, the founder of the city of Avantipur, whose site to-day is marked by massive ruins and a squalid village, led the country along the paths of prosperity. After his death the history of Kashmir sinks into a long tale of court intrigue with one weak king succeeding another, until the centuries of Hindu rule came to an end in 1323, when Renchan Shah, a Tibetan by birth and an adventurer at the court, raised a successful rebellion and usurped the throne. The Brahmans in an ill-advised moment refused to admit him to the Hindu faith, and shortly afterwards he embraced Islam with consequences that were disastrous

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to the Hindu section of the population. For the next ninety-four years the temples and idols of Siva were ruthlessly destroyed, the Brahmans were forcibly converted to Mahommedanism, and those of the people who obstinately continued to profess the Hindu faith were so savagely persecuted that the religion was almost completely stamped out.

However, when Zain-ul-Abadin, who was to reign for more than half a century, became king in 1420 for a time more moderate councils prevailed. He made for himself so great a reputation as a tolerant and enlightened monarch that his name has been handed down to succeeding generations endowed with legendary powers, and even to-day it is a household word in the country. He is supposed to have introduced the manufacture of the once famous Kashmir shawls by importing wool from Tibet and workmen from Turkestan, and the manufacture of papier maché articles, which still remains an important industry, is believed to have been started in his time.

After his death the advantages that the country had enjoyed under his enlightened rule rapidly disappeared, and the Chaks, a family of turbulent and unscrupulous chiefs, who had become the most powerful influence in the country, reduced it once more to disorder and despair. So that when tales of the rich vale that lay behind the mountains bordering the sun-scorched plains of the Punjab came to the ears of the Moghul court, and Akbar despatched a strong expedition to subdue the country, little effective opposition was made and Kashmir fell completely into his hands by 1586.

The Moghul emperors were not slow to appreciate the beauties and temperate climate of their most lately acquired province, and it soon became, as it were, a watering place for the Delhi court and its fame spread far and

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wide. The great emperor Akbar himself visited the valley on more than one occasion, and the wall, which still exists round the hill of Hari Parbat, was built under his orders. In the reign of Jehangir the famous gardens, some of which are still in existence and which even in their present decayed state are one of the sights of the valley, were laid out along the shores of the Dal lake. But, as the power of the Moghul dynasty waned, the governors sent from Delhi became so much the more oppressive and corrupt, and the country once again fell into its only too usual condition of disorder and anarchy.

Eventually the influence and protection of the Moghul Empire became no more than nominal, and when a Pathan army, under the leadership of Ahmad Shah, appeared in 1752, they met with little difficulty in overrunning the country. It was then that the wretched Kashmiris, who for ages past had been inured to grinding taxation and pitiless tyranny, drained the cup of misery to its dregs, until, unable to endure the appalling savagery of their Afghan rulers any longer, in 1818 they appealed to Ranjit Singh, who even then had already become famous as " the Lion of the Punjab," to come to their aid. Their appeal was not in vain, and in the following year his forces entered the valley and were so completely successful that before long the Sikh flag was flying from Hari Parbat.

This change in rulers, though an improvement on the previous state of affairs, can hardly have met with the unqualified approval of the wretched population, nine-tenths of whom, after centuries of persecution by a Mahommedan government, had become converted to the religion of their rulers, only to find themselves now once more in the hands of Hindus but little, if at all, more tolerant in matters of religion than the tyrants who had preceded them.

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Accounts of this time, written by contemporary Europeans and giving a vivid picture of the hopelessness and misery of the population, are to be found in the books of Vigne and Baron Hugel, who describe at length their travels in this strange land, which, at the time of which they wrote, had not been visited by more than two or three Europeans.

At the death of Ranjit Singh, the Sikh army, which was quartered in Srinagar, mutinied and murdered the Governor. This mutiny was quelled in 1841 by Ghulab Singh, who was then one of the most prominent generals in the Sikh army, and who, after successfully dealing with this rebellion, became the virtual ruler of Kashmir, though he still acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the court of Lahore, until after the battle of Sobraon in 1846, which marked the final overthrow of the Sikh forces by the British.

Ghulab Singh was a Dogra Rajput and his native country was the small and once independent state of Jammu, situated among the foot-hills bordering on the Punjab, and which had been in the hands of the Sikhs for a number of years. The Sikhs found small outlying states, such as Jammu, difficult to control, and in order to increase the security of their hold over them, they adopted the wise policy of keeping the most influential of the inhabitants in their employ. Ghulab Singh, who had quarrelled with the then Rajah of Jammu and who had served for some time in the Sikh army, where he had quickly attained distinction, was obviously a person to be placated if possible.

He was first made Governor and a short time after Rajah of Jammu, where he found ample scope for his enormous energy in reducing the affairs of that state to order, and in leading expeditions against the ruling

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chieftains of Baltistan and Ladakh, both of whom he subdued. He also engaged himself in conducting tortuous, and to modern eyes highly doubtful intrigues, which resulted in his gaining possession of the province of Kishtwar without striking a blow. Thus, at the outbreak of the war with the British, he was ruler in all but name of the provinces bordering on Kashmir and his sphere of influence almost completely surrounded the prize that he had in view as the ultimate object of his ambition, namely the rich and fertile valley itself.

At the close of the war, during which he had managed to remain neutral and had acted as a mediator between the opposing forces, the whole of these provinces were ceded to the British as one of the terms of peace. As a reward for the valuable work done by him in the course of the negotiations between the British and Sikh governments prior to the treaty of Lahore, a separate treaty was concluded with him immediately afterwards, by which the British Government, acting on the advice of Sir Henry Lawrence, made over to him the independent possession of the whole of the mountainous country that lies between the Indus and the Ravi. This, of course, includes almost the whole of present-day Kashmir, Baltistan, Ladakh and Kishtwar. In exchange Ghulab Singh agreed to pay to the British Government seventy-five lakhs of rupees and promised to make an annual tribute of one horse, six pairs of shawl goats and three pairs of the most perfect Kashmir shawls.

In this manner the country came into the hands of its present rulers. At first sight it will appear amazing that the British Government should have agreed to part with this rich and fertile country immediately after it had fallen into their hands, and for so trifling a sum, but

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it must be remembered that, when Lord Hardinge was conducting these negotiations, the Punjab had not yet been finally subdued, and that India was still in the hands of the East India Company, who were primarily interested in commerce. At that time Kashmir was practically unknown to Europeans and was separated from the plains of India by several days' journey along rough and narrow mountain paths. As there was then no road, the possibilities of developing the trade of the country to any profitable extent must have appeared very slight, while the difficulty of effectively governing so remote a province in the unsettled conditions that prevailed throughout India at that time would have been almost insuperable.

Ghulab Singh did little to improve the deplorable condition of the country. The first years of his reign were fully occupied in consolidating his position, and soon after, his health, worn out by his strenuous life, began to fail him, and for some years before he died in 1857 he was a complete invalid. His last public act on hearing of the outbreak of the mutiny was to offer the resources of the State to the British Government and hospitality to any European women, who might require a safe refuge.

His third son, Rambhir Singh, who succeeded him, and who turned out to be a much weaker ruler, was fully occupied during the first years of his reign in helping the British to quell the mutiny, and was not able to give much attention to the affairs of his country. While he was king Gilgit, which had been conquered previously but lost again some years before, was permanently occupied, with somewhat doubtful advantage to the State, which had the difficult and costly task of maintaining the long lines of communication with this

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distant outpost. This was only effected at the expense of much suffering on the part of the population, who were forced to supply labour for the upkeep of the Gilgit road and for the transport of supplies; labours which were attended by so much hardship and loss of life, that men setting out for such work bid farewell to their families with but little hope of ever seeing them again.

Rambhir Singh was a great admirer of European methods and institutions. He made several efforts to introduce reforms in the shape of state dispensaries and primary education after the European model, but without any very great measure of success, as he lacked the obstinate determination which was necessary in order to introduce reforms successfully to such a backward and naturally conservative people.

The last years of his reign were greatly affected by the results of the appalling famine of 1877, which decimated the country. He died in 1885 and was succeeded by his eldest son Lieut.-General H. H. Maharaja Sir Pratab Singh, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

Since 1885 Kashmir has enjoyed peace and a measure of prosperity and has made steady progress under the careful and enlightened rule of the late Maharaja, aided by a number of British officers, experts in various branches of administrative work. Among these, perhaps the most famous was Sir Walter Lawrence, who conducted the land settlement, which gave the peasants of Kashmir a security of tenure and a moderation in taxation that they had never dreamed of in the past.

The present ruler, Colonel H. H. Maharaja Sir Hari Singh, K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O., nephew of the late Maharaja Sir Pratab Singh, succeeded his illustrious uncle in September 1925.

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(This sketch of the history of the valley is necessarily slight. For a more detailed account consult the following works—(1) Kashmir, by Sir Francis Younghusband. (2) Kashmir and Jammu territories, by Drew. (3) Kashmir's Rajatarangini, translated by Sir Aurel Stein. (4) The valley of Kashmir, by W. R. Lawrence, and the works of Moorcroft, Hugel, Vigne and Bernier.)

§ 4.

The Way There.

The visitor to Kashmir to-day will find the journey, if long and irksome, no more uncomfortable than any other of similar length in India, unless it is made in the height of the hot weather, which lasts from April to about the beginning of July, when the rains usually break. As far as Rawalpindi he can travel in such comfort as a first class compartment in a mail train affords, and, upon his arrival there, he will, if he has had the forethought to order a room to be reserved in advance, find all the amenities of an excellent hotel at his disposal. The motor journey from Rawalpindi onwards is interesting, and as a rule uneventful, but heavy rain may cause landslips on the road and delays and temporary dislocation to traffic. However, such an occurrence is not likely to entail anything worse than an enforced wait at one of the dâk bungalows, which are situated at moderate intervals along the road.

The construction of this road along the Jhelum valley had been contemplated by the Kashmir State for a number of years, but little progress had been made, until the threatening attitude of Russia towards the Northern and Western frontiers of India at the end of the last century forced the Government of India to take the

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matter up, when it was speedily completed with the help of British engineers. Before this road was built it was no easy matter to penetrate into the Himalayas even as far as the valley of Kashmir. The vast mountainous districts beyond, which still lie remote from the progress of the twentieth century, and where for hundreds of miles there is no sign of a civilisation more modern than that of a thousand years ago, were accessible only to those among the really adventurous, who had sufficient leisure and private means to undertake lengthy and expensive journeys, or who could persuade the authorities that their travels would result in some tangible and perhaps profitable achievement. Even after the road was completed the journey of two hundred miles that separated Rawalpindi from Srinagar was a serious undertaking, very different from the present day, when motor transport has brought these two places as near in point of time as Oxford was to London in the days of the stage coaches.

The traveller of to-day, however, if he has fewer difficulties to contend with on the journey, and even though he can make an early breakfast at Flashman's Hotel at Rawalpindi and dine in comfort the same evening at Nedou's in Srinagar, misses something of the pleasure and interest that must have been experienced by those who braved the rigours of the journey by tonga or ekka. But any regrets for the leisurely modes of travel of the past should be tempered by relief that his vehicle is no longer drawn by the miserable ponies, whose galled backs and general neglect excited the pity of earlier European travellers. The Oriental cannot count among his virtues any sympathy for the feelings of animals or men in a station of life inferior to his own.

Before the days of motor transport there would have been time to appreciate the endless natural beauty that

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each corner of the winding road reveals. In a car the views crowd so thick one upon the other, that, at the end of the day, the traveller has nothing but a jumble of confused memories of tall bare hill-sides, tiny terraced fields and distant snow-crowned peaks. And his nerves will have suffered from meeting numerous yellow motor lorries swerving round corners at breakneck speed, and from crossing the various ramshackle structures, which have been built in many places during recent years, as apparently permanent substitutes for the proper bridges that the annual heavy floods have washed away.

In order, therefore, to appreciate the journey, the visitor should, if at all possible, curb his impatience, convince himself that, as his holiday has already started, haste is folly, and devote two days to the motor journey. In this way he will arrive fresh after a leisured and interesting trip through delightful scenery and, if he has been held up for a few hours through the road being blocked by a small landslide, which is by no means an uncommon occurrence after heavy rain, or by some other of the mishaps incidental to travel, he will not be consumed with impatience, or be put out by the early collapse of a carefully planned time-table.

A motor car for the journey should be obtained by previous arrangement with any one of the numerous agencies in Srinagar, or Rawalpindi, and, if the agency is at all efficient, it should be ready waiting at 'Pindi station. The rates for motor cars vary very much according to the demand. One hundred and twenty-five rupees for a good roomy car for the return journey is about the average charge, but a bargain can frequently be struck, if a car can be found that has brought a party down and which would otherwise have to return to Kashmir empty.

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Heavy luggage must be sent by lorry at a charge of about nine rupees a maund (a maund is eighty pounds) and your agent will make the necessary arrangements for you. These lorries take two days or more over the journey, so that everything that will be needed for the first day or two should be taken with you in the car. It is surprising how much gear can be stowed by a Kashmiri driver on the luggage grid, along the running boards and between the bonnet and the front mud-guards. A glance at the state of the tires and to see that there is a serviceable spare wheel is advisable before starting. These important items are not always attended to by the driver with the thoroughness that they deserve, and, if they are left to his discretion, a puncture may result in hours of unnecessary delay.

At Rawalpindi railway station a horde of people will meet the train, offering themselves as servants, or promising to supply cars at rates far cheaper than those quoted by your agent. Nothing could be a greater mistake for anyone new to the country than to employ one of these touts as a servant, or to engage one of the cars which are offered so cheaply; nobody who knows the country would give either a moment's consideration.

The servant will almost certainly be a dishonest rascal, dismissed by his previous master and unable to find employment unless he can impose himself upon some trusting new-comer. Beware of an ingratiating smile and a bundle of recommendation letters which are easily stolen, or borrowed for the occasion. The cheap car will probably break down, or else, on arrival at Srinagar, the driver will demand exorbitant sums as baksheesh and extra payment for all the luggage.

When travelling alone, a seat in the Mail Van can usually be obtained at a cost of about forty rupees, but

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there will be no room for your servant, nor for any luggage, except a small suit case, and it will be necessary to send all the rest of your gear in charge of your servant, who will be able to obtain a seat in a lorry for a few rupees. If you are accompanied by a family and the consequent large amount of luggage, and money is of more importance than speed and refinements of comfort, a lorry can be hired and family, luggage and all can be packed into it at small expense.

It will usually be necessary to spend a night at Rawalpindi, where there are several hotels and a number of boarding houses, of which Flashman's is perhaps the best known. At intervals along the road there are rest-houses. Most of them are fairly well furnished and comfortable and have a staff of servants, who will provide meals at a moderate charge.

The first few miles after leaving 'Pindi are along the level and there is not much of interest to be seen, unless, perhaps, it is a column of troops on the march, but the road soon enters low brown foot-hills covered with burnt-up scrub and begins to climb steeply. At the foot of these hills there is a toll bar, where a small fee for each car has to be paid, and at Tret, twenty-five miles from Rawalpindi, the first of the rest-houses is passed. For the next few miles the road winds its way steeply upwards with numerous and sensational hair-pin bends, till Murree, a large hill station and sanatorium for the troops stationed at Rawalpindi, is reached after a journey of thirty-seven miles.

From some distance below Tret as far as Murree the road cannot be used at night without a special permit, so, unless one of these passes has been obtained, it is not advisable to leave Rawalpindi if there is not sufficient time to reach Murree in daylight. All cars are timed

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between the toll bar and Murree, so a safe speed on this somewhat dangerous section of the road cannot be exceeded with impunity. At Murree there are several large hotels and a number of boarding houses, but the station is crowded during the summer months and some difficulty may be found in getting accommodation, unless rooms have been arranged for previously.

After leaving Murree the road, which has climbed to an elevation of six thousand five hundred feet, begins to descend steadily for a number of miles, until Kohala, which is only eighteen hundred feet above the sea, is reached. This village marks the boundary of British India and is situated at a distance of sixty-four miles from Rawalpindi and one hundred and thirty-two from Srinagar. It is extremely hot in the summer and the narrow valley, shut in by bare steep hill-sides, is stuffy and airless, so a halt in the comfortable dâk bungalow should be avoided, if possible, during the summer months. What was once a substantial suspension bridge here spans the rushing torrent of the Jhelum, but it has been badly damaged by floods from time to time and now sags alarmingly, though it is apparently safe enough even for motor traffic.

On the far side of the bridge Kashmir territory is entered and there is a Customs post. Personal luggage is exempt, but duty has to be paid on all household goods, stores, etc. Sporting guns and rifles belonging to visitors are admitted free and so is a moderate amount of ammunition. The visitor has to pay a small tax on entering the country and a toll of a rupee or two for crossing the bridge is charged.

After leaving Kohala the road winds along the left bank of the Jhelum, and, though for the most part it is well engineered and the gradient gentle, there is frequently little room to spare when a car coming the other way has

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to be passed. In many places a low and rickety stone wall is all that lies between the road and a sheer drop of many feet into the river raging far below, and in places after heavy rain there may be some danger from falling stones.

The scenery is mostly very fine. Tall and barren hills rise steeply on either side of the road. Tiny villages of flat-roofed houses cling to the hill-sides, with small terraced fields climbing above them tier upon tier far up towards the skyline, and occasionally, through a gap in the nearer hills, there is a distant glimpse of some mighty snow-clad peak. At the mouths of many of the nullahs opening into the main valley there are well formed alluvial fans, which are deeply scarred by watercourses and form a distinctive feature of the landscape.

Twenty-one miles from Kohala and eighty-five from 'Pindi lies Domel, where the Kishengunga river joins the Jhelum. Here there is a bridge leading to the town of Muzaffarabad and connecting the Abbottabad road with the Jhelum valley route, and there is a second Customs post. The Abbottabad route is only used by visitors coming from down country in the late winter, when the Murree hills are sometimes blocked for days on end by deep drifts of snow, or when a heavy fall of rain has resulted in a slip blocking the difficult section of the road between Kohala and Domel. The railway has now arrived as far as Havelian, nine miles short of Abbottabad, and from there it is forty-nine miles along quite a good, though narrow motor road to Domel, where the main road is joined.

Domel is the most northerly point reached by the road, which now turns off eastward at an acute angle towards Srinagar, still a hundred and eleven miles away. Fourteen miles further on Garhi, situated midway ween the plains and Kashmir, and the usual

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stopping place for the night, is reached. Here there is a large well furnished rest-house prettily situated in a compound just above the road. On the opposite side the river is spanned by a slender suspension bridge, which has for many years past replaced the old rope bridge that used to be one of the sights of the Jhelum valley road.

The appearance of the country has now quite changed. Since leaving Kohala the road has been climbing steadily, if gently, and we have now reached an elevation of nearly three thousand feet above the sea. The appearance of the landscape is greener and more fertile. Plants and birds, which would be familiar in an English country-side, are to be seen here and there, among others that are inhabitants, during the cold weather, of the arid plains that we left behind only this morning. The cool air of the mountains strikes keenly and invigorates both minds and bodies enervated by the heat of an Indian summer. And to-night we shall need a blanket or two, and perhaps the added joy of a fire in our bedrooms, in front of which we shall make a hasty toilet before turning in to hours of well-earned rest.

After leaving Garhi early the following morning the road continues to climb steadily with easy gradients and many corners, each one of which hides a wealth of fresh and magnificent scenery. Chinari, a small hamlet with a dâk bungalow, is passed after sixteen miles, and it is eighteen further to Uri, where there is another bungalow, which is comfortable, but not so prettily situated as the one at Garhi. Just beyond Uri the road makes a lengthy detour, following the contours of the mountain side in order to cross a large and precipitous side nullah, so that, after a drive of two miles or more, the road arrives again almost opposite the bungalow and only a stone's throw

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from it across the nullah. Many of the hill-sides above the road in the next few miles are of shale, which is continually slipping downwards, with the result that this part of the road is often closed by landslides. These occur most frequently a short distance beyond Uri where the road crosses the face of a steep shale cliff.

As Rampur is approached the shale is left behind and the hills are heavily wooded with fine forests of deodars. The flume carrying the water, from which the electric power that supplies the whole of the Kashmir valley is generated, is carried for several miles across the face of the hill-sides some hundreds of feet above the road, and on roughly the same alignment, to the power house near Rampur. Half-way between Uri and Rampur there are the remains of an old ruined temple similar to those that are to be seen in many other parts of Kashmir. The buildings are, however, in a very decayed state. At Rampur there is a good rest-house, and, as the road has now reached an elevation of almost five thousand feet, the nights are nearly always cool.

The sixteen miles to Baramulla are more or less along the level and the scenery, though interesting, is not so fine as that which has gone before. Another ruined temple lying just to the left of the road is passed some miles beyond Rampur. The valley widens out as Baramulla is approached, and, although there is no sudden climax when the promised land is revealed spread out at the traveller's feet, fine views of the valley and its circlet of snow-clad peaks will reward the visitor if the day is clear.

Baramulla itself is unimpressive, consisting, as it does, of a jumble of dilapidated wooden houses and narrow dirty streets. Below the town considerable dredging works have been carried out in order to deepen the bed of the Jhelum to increase its capacity to discharge

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the enormous quantity of flood water that drains into the valley during the summer months, when heavy rain coincides with the melting of the snows. It is considered that this narrow gorge is insufficient in size and causes the flood water to bank up, which results in the serious floods that occur from time to time and bring in their train disaster to the inhabitants of the lower lying parts of the country. This theory is confirmed by simultaneous observations which have been taken at various points on the Indus during floods. On this river the narrow gorges, which lie below the open valleys at Skardu and Gilgit, are found to have the effect of backing up the water in times of flood in exactly the same way that the Baramulla gorge does in Kashmir.

If the new-comer is wise and not in too great a hurry, he will have arranged with his agent for a house-boat to meet him at Baramulla, whence he will journey by leisurely stages to Sopor, thence across the Wular lake and up the winding placid Jhelum to Srinagar. By entering the country that he has come so far to see in this way, he will avoid both the drive along the straight and dusty poplar lined road, which, in the thirty-four miles between Baramulla and Srinagar, has neither any hill nor hardly a curve to relieve the monotony, and the unimpressive approach to the capital which the motor road affords. The journey will take two or three days, if no attempt is made to hurry, and, in the course of it, there will be ample time to see something of the country.

The Wular lake, which is the largest and one of the most beautiful sheets of water in India, will have to be crossed, and the heart of the valley, through which the Jhelum flows between the Wular and Srinagar, will be traversed. Descriptions of the scenery have flowed from

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the pen of every writer who has visited Kashmir, and we do not intend to add to the wealth of simile that has been squandered, more or less in vain, in attempting to convey an adequate idea of the reality. The snow-capped mountains, faithfully reflected in the quiet reed-fringed waters of the lake, the placid meandering reaches of the river, all unspoiled by the vulgarities of modern touristdom, combined with the startling mixture of every-day English birds and plants and the gorgeous squalidness of an Oriental land, cannot be absorbed in the course of one short journey. For the mind, in common with less sublime organs, suffers from a surfeit of good things, particularly when among them there is a strong leavening of the putrid.

The peaceful interest of this leisurely trip, however, and the natural beauties that it reveals are only to be enjoyed during the early months of the spring and summer. Later, the marshy shores of the Wular lake, and the reedy swamps that cover a large portion of this end of the valley, become infested with myriad swarms of mosquitoes, which make life a burden and effectually prevent any appreciation of the beauties of nature.

There is another road leading from the plains to Kashmir which has many advantages over the Jhelum valley route. Until quite recently it was reserved for the Maharaja and his staff and permission had first to be obtained through the Resident to use it, but it is now open to general use and there are good rest-houses at intervals along it.

This road starts from Jammu, which is the winter seat of the Kashmir Government, and runs over the Banihal pass, through Islamabad and thence to Srinagar. For several months each year the Banihal pass, nine thousand feet high, is always blocked with snow, which

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lies until quite late in the spring, and so this route can only be used during the summer and until the first snow falls block it again about the beginning of November. The road does not cross the actual summit of the pass, but runs through a tunnel for some considerable distance.

It is two hundred and five miles from Jammu to Srinagar, some seven miles further than by the Jhelum valley route, and the road is in many places rather narrow, particularly when passing other traffic, but it has been greatly improved during recent years. The scenery in places is very fine. The great advantage of this route for visitors coming from, or returning to those not inconsiderable parts of India that lie to the east and south of Kashmir, is that, by motoring as far as Wazirabad, which is some fifty miles beyond Jammu, or even to Lahore, sixty-five miles further still, a part of the long and dull railway journey can be avoided without incurring any very great additional expense.

§ 5.

House-boats.

Unless the newly arrived visitor has friends with whom he has arranged to stay, the simplest arrangement is to put up at either Nedou's hotel, or at one of the several boarding houses that are opened in Srinagar early each spring, some of which are both comfortable and moderate in their charges. In this way he will have leisure in which to find his bearings before entering upon the cares of house-keeping, and there will be no likelihood of his being committed to some arrangement that may prove too expensive, or otherwise unsuitable. The expense

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of staying at a hotel is not very great. A charge of about ten rupees a day will not be exceeded for ordinary accommodation and in return for which all household worries will be avoided.

There are not many European houses in Srinagar, and most of those that do exist are occupied by officials, or by residents, who remain in the country all the year round. It is difficult for anyone, who is not a native of the country, to get a satisfactory title from the State, or a lease sufficiently favourable to justify the expense of building, so by far the largest number of visitors live in house-boats. These are not only cheap and comfortable, but very convenient, as they can be easily moved about and friends can arrange for their house-boats to be moored close together.

These house-boats are, or, perhaps we should say, can be, extremely attractive, if they are tastefully and suitably furnished, and a number of European residents live in them all the year round. During the cold winter months they can be kept warm at small expense by installing a portable wood burning stove in each room with the chimney leading out through one of the windows, from which a pane of glass has been removed. Open fire places are usually built into these house-boats, but they are rather dangerous owing to the risk of setting fire to the boat. A house-boat of average size has two living rooms and two or three smallish bedrooms with bath-rooms attached, while in fine weather an awning spread on the flat roof will give further accommodation. The servants live in another smaller boat with matting sides, called a doonga, which is moored close astern and on which all the cooking is done.

All house-boats which are for hire are supposed to be fully, if plainly, furnished and to have a reasonable supply

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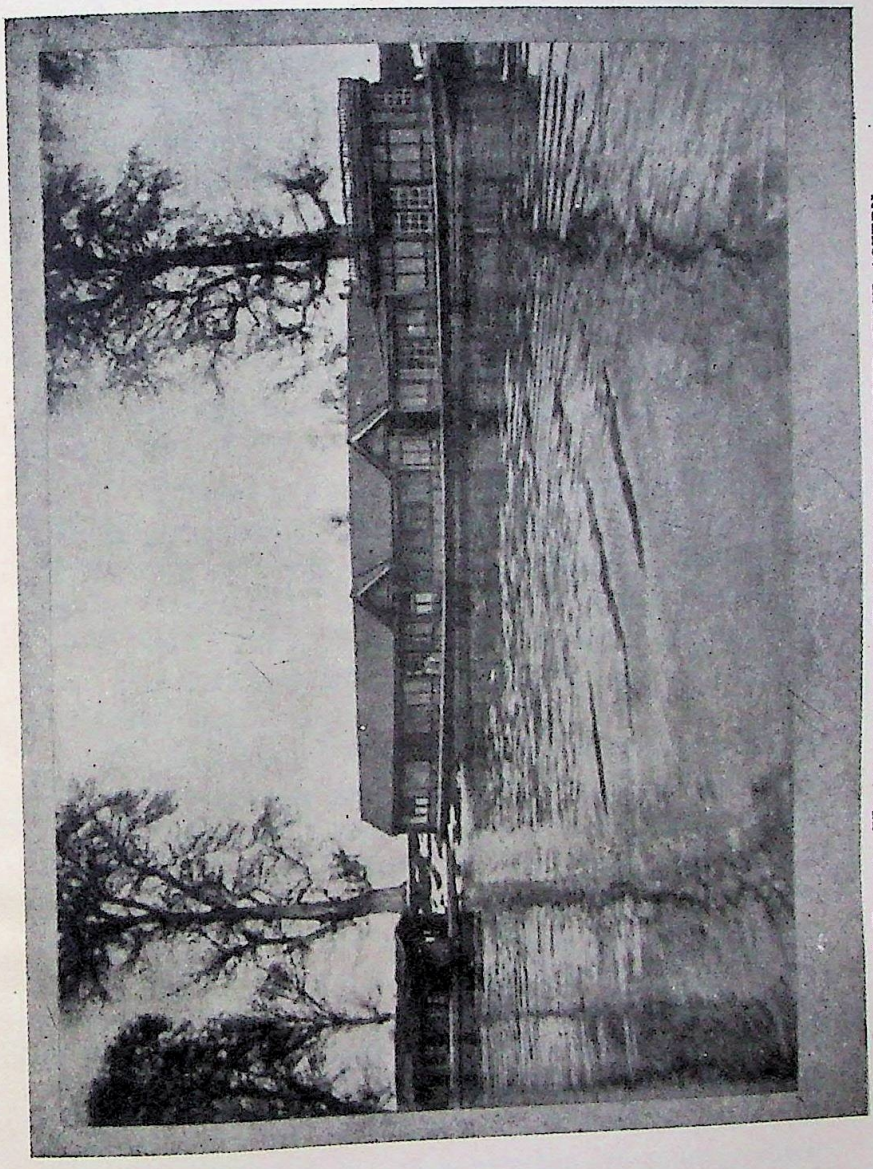

A Typical House-boat with The Cook-boat, moored close astern.

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of cutlery, glass, china, etc. Some of the more unscrupulous owners, however, cut these furnishings very fine, and it is as well to ascertain exactly what is going to be supplied before entering into a contract.

A very large house-boat is a mistake, as it is difficult and expensive to move about. It may also be too large to get under the bridges, or to go through the Dal gate, which forms the narrow entrance to the Dal lake, and through which a strong current rushes, so that manœuvring a heavy and unwieldy house-boat through it is a difficult and arduous task. If a large party wishes to remain together, it is far more convenient and not much more expensive to hire two small house-boats rather than one large one.

A shikara, complete with the necessary number of paddles, cushions, etc., should also be supplied with each house-boat and without any extra charge. Shikaras are light paddling boats something like a mixture between a canoe and a punt. They serve as a tender to the house-boat and are used when visiting other house-boats, for shopping, and so on.

For house-boats of medium size, properly furnished and with a doonga and shikara in attendance, about one hundred and twenty rupees a month would be an average charge during the season. In the winter months one could easily be obtained for about a third of this sum, as there are practically no visitors at this time of year. In addition the cook will want about three rupees a day to cater for each person, for which he should supply everything except wines, fruit and stores. He will, of course, make an extra charge for any entertaining that is done. There will be several other small expenses for electric current, the hire of a mooring place, etc., which will have to be met.

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All ordinary European wines, stores and food are obtainable in Kashmir, except beef. The Maharajah is a Hindu and the killing of cows is therefore strictly prohibited.

Four servants will ordinarily be sufficient. A cook, a khansamah, who will wait at table and look after the bedrooms, a sweeper and a bhisti, who will also do any odd jobs that may arise. Except the sweeper, the servants are usually members of one family, as the sharp distinction between the various types of servants, which is universal in the plains of India, is less distinct in Kashmir. Perhaps, because, after so much religious persecution, the Kashmiri does not attach so great an importance to conventions founded upon religious teachings as do other types of Mahommedans. There is often a younger member of the family, who will be useful to manage the shikara, for which work he will be quite competent as they all learn to handle boats efficiently at a very early age.

The cook and khansamah will have to be paid twenty-five to thirty rupees a month and the sweeper and bhisti about ten rupees less.

Bad Kashmiri servants are very, very bad, but the better ones are hardworking and obliging. Even the best of them, however, require strict supervision, and a daily visit to the cook boat is essential to ensure that a decent standard of cleanliness is maintained. The lowest of our standards in this matter are so far above the natural instincts of the servants, that the routine, which we impose, seems to them no more than a set of irksome and entirely unnecessary rules, which foreigners unreasonably insist upon and which are to be avoided whenever possible.

Strict orders forbidding the use of river or lake water for cooking, washing clothes, or, indeed, any domestic purpose must be issued and care taken to see that they

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are enforced. The river water, however clear it may appear to the eye, is extremely dangerous, as there is always a large population living in boats, most of the occupants of which have the most primitive ideas regarding cleanliness and sanitation. Cholera and other typical diseases are always present in the city and occasionally break out into serious epidemics.

Water and milk should, of course, always be boiled before it is drunk and fruit carefully washed in some disinfectant.

A number of house-boats are moored along the Bund and along the banks of the canal leading from the river to the Dal gate, but these sites, though they are very convenient for the club and town, are crowded and stuffy in the summer. A far better arrangement is to have the house-boat moved into the Dal lake and moored in some convenient situation not too far distant from the city, or to go even further afield to Sumbal, Shadipore or Gandarbal, where the crowd is less and a quieter and more secluded life is possible.

§ 6.

Caveat Emptor.

One of the most striking features of life in Srinagar, perhaps because it forms one of the chief drawbacks to the summer season, is the hordes of "Get-rich-quick" merchants, whose method of conducting business is to pester the wretched visitor whenever and wherever he appears from early morn until long after dark. For sheer persistence they can have no rivals. There are, in addition, numbers of men and boys offering their services as guides, boatmen, servants, dog-boys,

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golf-caddies, etc., etc., and, during a walk along any of the principal streets, the visitor is accompanied by a small army of touts all talking at the tops of their raucous voices and squabbling among themselves at intervals.

Even a house-boat moored far away among the further recesses of the Dal lake will not be immune from these enterprising merchants, who pack an assortment of their wares into a shikara and patrol the rows of moored house-boats throughout the length of a summer day.

The most inspired abuse has not the slightest effect upon them. There is no name that will raise a blush upon the sallow cheek of a Kashmiri, if he thinks that there is the faintest chance of bringing off a deal, and the only way in which to secure a measure of peace and privacy is to erect a barrier of stakes driven into the mud at some distance from the house-boat. This method has disadvantages, as it keeps away your friends and those few pedlars, whose wares, such as fruit, are in daily demand. Perhaps the best solution for the dweller in a house-boat is to obtain a large and powerful water pistol, which can be brought into use if importunate pedlars do not depart as soon as requested.

Many of the things that these men have for sale are most attractive, and the majority of visitors to Kashmir take away with them a certain amount of Kashmiri work. However, before inviting one of them to display the stock of his shikara on the floor of your house-boat, or visiting the shops along the Bund, or near Third Bridge, it is essential to realise that the Kashmiri is a most persuasive salesman. The season during which any large amount of business can be done is short and big profits are therefore necessary. And they are masters of every dishonest trick of the trade that you can possibly imagine and of many that you would never dream of.

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Never be impressed by the voluble protestations of honesty that the shop-keeper will make, unless he asserts that he has been a pupil at Mr. Biscoe's school, when usually some small degree of honesty can safely be relied upon. Otherwise, unless you are confident that you could come off well in a deal with an Irish horse-coper, you can be certain that you will be cheated. You may not discover the fact before you have left the country, and this explains the letters of recommendation, which the shop-keepers produce, written by other visitors. The manners of Kashmiri shop-keepers are charming; they will invite you into the picturesque inner rooms of their shops and will give you China tea and Pampur rotis, but, if they can fleece you, they will.

Before buying any Kashmiri made article it is necessary to examine it very carefully for flaws. They take no pride in honest work and paint and putty hide a multitude of defects. A good finish, or a high polish is often relied upon to distract the attention from weak or badly made foundations, but, if you buy carefully and with discretion, many well made and attractive things can be obtained at quite a moderate price.

Remember that it is an Eastern country and that bargaining is therefore necessary. A shop-keeper will invariably be willing to take about half the price he asks at first, though it may take several days to convince him that you will go no higher. A common trick is to leave the house-boat, or wherever it may be, in well-simulated indignation and disgust at the ridiculous price that you have offered. However, if you remain calm, you may be certain that the man will return the next day prepared to accept your offer, though with many protestations that he will incur a loss by so doing.

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Some of the wood-carving and furniture is very attractive, but only the best craftsmen put a really good finish into their work, or exhibit any originality of design. They will copy faithfully any picture or drawing of other furniture, and a well-thumbed illustrated catalogue of one of the large London stores is always produced, from which the customer is expected to choose the style in which he wishes the finished article to be made.

The greatest drawback of this type of Kashmiri work is that well seasoned wood is rarely used, and although such furniture may stand the climate of Kashmir itself well enough, it often warps and cracks badly after a short time in the heat of the plains of India, and seems to stand transporting to Europe but little better.

The best articles of furniture are, however, very good and are made of well seasoned wood. Such pieces as these are kept in the showroom, and, when a customer buys any particular piece that is so exhibited, he is pretty sure to be safe, provided he sees it packed and delivered with his own eyes. Otherwise an inferior article of similar design, made of poorly seasoned wood, will be substituted, which is certain to crack and warp in a very short time. Never be so rash as to arrange for any article to be sent to you after leaving the country, or by value-payable post.

Khatamband work is very attractive and makes very effective ceilings for the better class of house-boat and would look well in a suitable style of English house. These ceilings are made of thin slivers of pine-wood, sometimes interspersed with other darker coloured woods, which are pieced together so as to form intricate and beautiful patterns.

Carpets have been made in large numbers only during comparatively recent years. The industry received its

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first impetus when the shawl-weaving trade began to fall upon evil days. Shawls used to be one of the most important products of Kashmir, but, as the chief market for them was in France, where they are supposed to have been introduced by Napoleon, the industry never recovered from the effect of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. After which France had for many years other more important things to think about than the buying of expensive oriental shawls. This first set-back was followed by the ghastly famine of '77, when the shawl-weavers, who, from their sedentary indoor lives, were naturally weakly, died in large numbers. At its height the industry found employment for many thousands of people and a really good shawl was worth a fabulous sum. Nor is this surprising, as the work was so fine that each one was supposed to have cost the eyesight of one or more of the workmen who made it. Several very good examples of Kashmir shawls are to be seen in the museum at Srinagar.

A number of the weavers who survived the famine took up carpet making, and several Europeans entered into the business and founded successful firms, which are still flourishing in Srinagar. The fine quality of the material and the pleasing dyes and patterns make Kashmiri carpets well worth buying, but they are by no means cheap and sixty to seventy rupees for a good one of moderate size will have to be paid.

A branch of this industry, which finds many admirers, is the embroidering of Yarkandi felts in bold designs. These make quite effective bedroom mats and are fairly cheap.

Another of the more important indigenous industries is the manufacture of papier maché articles. The best of these are most attractive, though there is little real papier maché used nowadays and most of the articles are made on a foundation of smooth polished wood, or brass.

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on which the designs are painted. European colouring matter and varnishes are also now largely used. All the work is done free hand and many of the designs are most intricate and artistic. Flower bowls, candlesticks, blotting pads, powder bowls, small tables and a number of other articles are made. A good flower bowl will probably not cost less than thirty-five rupees, and the price of other things will be in proportion, but, considering the amount of time and skilled labour expended, such a price can hardly be considered unreasonable.

Silver and copper smiths also display their wares. Although they can do good work, really first class designs and workmanship is rare, and, as there is no system of hall-marking or assay, the chances of being cheated are prodigious.

There are several good furriers and excellent stone marten, snow leopard and other skins can be bought at a price far less than in Europe. The buyer must know what he is about, however, otherwise he will be fobbed off with a very inferior article, for which he will be charged a high price. The majority of these furs come from Central Asia, where the animals are easily trapped when the winter snows drive them into the valleys, and their search for food takes them near to human habitations.

There are also a number of dealers in semi-precious stones and jade, and occasionally a good piece can be picked up at a moderate price.

Very good suit cases and other leathern articles are cheap, and, provided care is exercised in making a choice, many of these things will give hard and long service. Shoes are usually not well cut, are poorly finished and do not wear well, so, although they are very cheap, they should only be ordered with great circumspection.

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At first sight clothes appear to be absurdly cheap, both men's and women's, but really the only things that are worth buying are a finely woven tweed, called pushmina, and a similar, though much coarser cloth, which is locally known as puttoo. Both these make up very cheaply into serviceable suits, but the cloth is so loosely woven that it quickly loses its shape and does not wear very well.

Kashmiri tailors can copy any pattern, and they keep a large selection of European stuffs in their shops. Clothes made by them, however, though cheap enough to buy, rarely wear well and are usually a disappointment in the long run.

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CHAPTER II.

Srinagar—The Dal Lake and Moghul Gardens—The lower reaches of the Jhelum—The Sind Valley—The Eastern end of the Valley—Gulmarg.

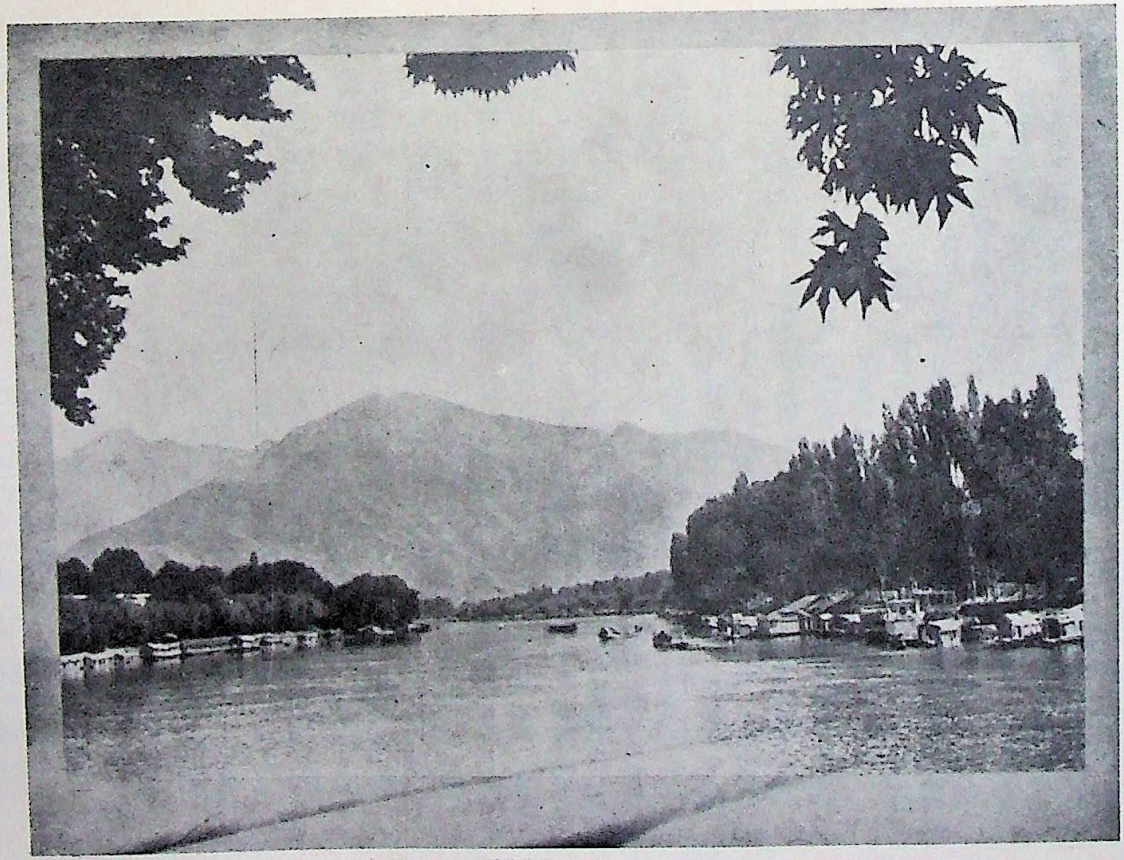
§ 1.

Srinagar.

BEFORE entering into the round of tennis, bathing and dancing that comprises the Srinagar season a few days should be spent in doing a little mild sight-seeing, and in exploring this picturesque city and its immediate surroundings. The best way of seeing Srinagar is by boat, as almost all the places of interest, and the majority of the leading European and native shops, are situated close to the river. In fact the Jhelum and its tributary canals are the main highways of the place and are crowded with traffic, so that Srinagar has inevitably been called the Venice of the East.

The European quarter lies at the upstream end of the town. Here are situated the church, with the attendant parsonage, both surrounded by a delightful garden, the houses of the various European officials, the Residency and the Club, with its "chabutra," shaded by immense chenars, projecting out over the river.

The Munshi Bagh and Sonawar Bagh, two extensive open spaces dotted with enormous trees, lie between the river and the European residential quarter, which extends past the foot of the Takht for some distance along the Gupkar road. Most of the European residents are soldiers and other officers of the various services, who have retired



POPLARS MAKE A COOL AND SHADY SETTING FOR THE MOORED HOUSE-BOATS.

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to Kashmir after completing their service in India. The houses are nearly all half-timbered and are surrounded by attractive gardens, so that they appear extraordinarily English. Indeed, one of the most striking features of Srinagar is the amazing mixture of scenes that are essentially English with others that are entirely Oriental.

Near the foot of the Takht there is a small nursing home for Europeans, which is supported by voluntary subscriptions. All subscribers are admitted at a specially low rate, so, even on purely mercenary grounds, a subscription may prove a wise investment.

Most of the site on which the city is built is low-lying and is protected from floods by a massive embankment, or bund, that runs almost as far as First Bridge. Most of the leading shops, the Banks and the Post Office are situated along the Bund, which is crowded with shoppers during the season. In spite of this protection the river sometimes overflows its banks and causes much damage and loss of life in the city and the surrounding villages. Nedou's Hotel, which was completely destroyed by fire some years ago, but has since been rebuilt, the polo ground and the very indifferent golf course are situated at some distance from the river on level ground.

During its course through the city, the Jhelum is spanned by seven bridges. Most of them are old and ramshackle in appearance, but First Bridge, called by the Kashmiris, Amira Kadal, and over which the main Rawalpindi road runs into the city, is a modern stone affair. The Maharaja's palace, a large rambling erection of little architectural interest, lies some distance below the bridge on the left bank of the river. Prominent among the palace buildings is a small temple with a gilded dome. Opposite the palace is moored the fleet of State boats, in which the Maharaja makes his ceremonial entrance to the city on his

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return each spring from his winter capital at Jammu This water procession is a sight that is well worth seeing and should not be missed.

Just below the palace, the Kut-i-Kol, which cuts off a large bend in the river, opens out, and on the opposite side there is the entrance to another canal leading towards the Dal lake. A journey down one of these canals will give an interesting glimpse of this dirty, yet attractive city and will afford a vivid idea of the conditions in which the townsfolk live.

We shall see women, tall and with stately figures, carrying heavy water-pots up the steep flights of steps, known as "yaribals," that lead from the edge of the river. Stalwart men, with patriarchal beards dyed red with henna, sunning themselves in leisured ease, and with an air of superiority that ill accords with the copious tears, which they readily shed under the influence of strong emotion: and rickety three-storied houses, many with elaborately carven doors and windows, with every line out of true, and their high-pitched roofs covered with earth, that is now green with rich new grass, or a mass of fair spring flowers: and an occasional Hindu temple, with its pointed dome shining silver in the sunlight reflected from its covering of kerosene oil tins beaten flat: and numberless other odd, or amusing sights, so that a journey down these narrow water-ways, however odiferous, can never be dull.

In the public streets dirt and sanitation are completely disregarded, pariah dogs are the sole scavengers, and it is a common enough sight to see a person emptying a pail of household filth into the water at one place and another drinking, or cleaning his teeth immediately below. The constant presence in the city of cholera and other infectious diseases is therefore scarcely to be wondered at. The

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Brahmans, or Pundits, who order their whole lives by a complicated code of arbitrary rules regarding what is clean and what is not, and who will only touch food prepared by persons of the same caste as themselves, exert a great influence over public opinion. They regard cholera as a visitation of the gods and obstinately oppose modern medical practices and ideas of sanitation, while the Mahommedan priests, who exercise enormous influence over their followers, are just as prejudiced.

Below Sixth Bridge, the Yarkandi Serai, where the caravans from Central Asia put up, is sometimes interesting, as all sorts of curious people may be seen there resting after their long journey. Seventh Bridge, the lowest of them all, is just below, and here the return journey should be commenced, for there is still much to be seen in the main channel, and the lower reaches of the river can be left for another occasion.

Working slowly up against the current and avoiding an occasional enormous raft of logs, which the frantic efforts of an odd man and a boy or two are hardly sufficient to keep under control, the first thing worthy of notice is the Maharajgunj, which is one of the most important bazaars in the city and has a fine flight of stone steps leading to it from the river. Near by, there is an old and interesting building, the Badshah, or tomb of Zain-ul-Abadin, one of the more famous Kashmir kings, who ruled in the fifteenth century.

Fourth and Fifth Bridges, typical of the bridges which span the Jhelum, are curious structures that harmonize perfectly with their surroundings. They are built on a foundation of old boats, which are filled with stones and then sunk. After this foundation has been strengthened with piles, piers of rough-hewn logs, laid in a hollow square and filled with boulders, are built upon it.

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These piers are gradually canti-levered, and, at a height sufficient to allow craft to pass underneath, enormous logs are laid as girders to support the roadway. Such bridges as these are cheap to construct and far stronger than they look, for, although the massive piers considerably obstruct the flow of the river, they are rarely damaged by floods.

The conspicuous building with a stumpy spire on the right bank a short distance below Third Bridge, is the Shah Hamadan mosque, which to the Mahommedan community is one of the most sacred places in Kashmir. It is situated, like so many other mosques in the valley, on the site of an old Hindu temple, and even to-day there is a small shrine built into the walls, at which numerous Hindus daily pay their devotions. The building is constructed entirely of wood and is in places beautifully carved. The roof is covered with a layer of earth, which bears a rich crop of grass in the spring, and is surmounted with a curious brazen filial. The whole building has a distinct pagoda-like outline, which possibly suggests the influence of the Buddhist religion in its design.

Close by, but on the opposite side of the river, is the Pathar Musjid, constructed, as its name implies, of stone; but now no more than an impressive ruin. This mosque was built by Nur Mahal, but, owing to the sex of its founder, it has never been accepted as a sacred building by the Mahommedans, who have clear-cut ideas regarding the functions of women and their position in the social structure. It has therefore been used as a State granary for many years.

In the vicinity of Third Bridge there are a large number of shops for the sale of papier-maché, wood-carving, carpets and other things, and an amusing hour can be spent looking over the various articles that are for sale. Such a pastime, however, is likely to prove expensive,

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unless great strength of mind is exercised, as Kashmiris are most persuasive salesmen, and, in the dim light of their shops, the flaws and crudities, which mar all but the best of their work, are not easily detected.

Just above the bridge, and situated on the left bank of the river, is perhaps the most interesting place in the whole of Srinagar—the Church Mission School, in charge of the Reverend C. E. Tyndale Biscoe, who has written a most interesting and entertaining book* on Kashmir and the school in which he has worked for the past forty years.

To anyone who knows the intense conservatism of the Kashmiri, and the amount of inertia, ignorance and prejudice that has to be overcome before any progress can be made, the measure of achievement that the school has been able to show during these years is astounding. In his book Mr. Biscoe describes how, when he first arrived in Srinagar, he found the school, which had then been in existence for only a few years, consisting of about two hundred boys, most of them Brahmans, which is the highest Hindu caste. None of the boys took the slightest interest in games, or pastimes of any sort, they considered any sort of manual labour to be degrading, and their sole ambition was to pass exams, which would make them eligible for a post as a clerk in one of the Government offices. He found, in fact, the system that prevails throughout India to-day. A system that entirely neglects the moulding of character, or any of the broader aspects of education, and turns out a class of men, physically degenerate, who consider manual labour beneath their dignity, who are sadly lacking in moral stamina and whose numbers far exceed the subordinate government posts for which they are solely fitted.

*"Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade," published by Secley Service and Co.

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He describes how the pupils were taught to play foot-ball with an unclean leather ball, to row and swim and box with unclean leather gloves. How consistent lying and cheating were overcome. And finally, how even Brahmans were induced to take up social service, to help the aged and poor, to have some respect for women and some feeling for the sufferings of animals, with the result that to-day there are numbers of the better class of Kashmiris, who have been through this school and are proud of it, and who exercise a great influence upon the remainder of the population by their example. A Kashmiri, who has been educated at Mr. Biscoe's school, can usually be trusted.

Other places that are worth visiting, but which are not accessible from the river and in consequence demand special expeditions, are the Jama Musjid, the Takht and Hari Parbat. The Jama Musjid, which is the largest mosque in the city, is a somewhat impressive building that has recently been extensively repaired and restored from the dilapidated condition, in which, until a short time ago, it formed a shining example of the apathy of the large Mahommedan community in Srinagar. Founded originally, it is believed, in the twelfth century, it has passed through many vicissitudes and has been destroyed by fire more than once. The site on which it stands is claimed both by the Hindus and the Buddhists of Ladakh as a place sacred to their belief.

Not very far from the Jama Musjid is the hill and fort of Hari Parbat, and both of these places can conveniently be visited in the course of a single excursion. A pass from the Visitors' Bureau is necessary before the fort can be entered. The hill of Hari Parbat rises abruptly to a height of about five hundred feet above the plain on which the city stands. It is surrounded by an ancient wall and surmounted by fortifications, and, with the

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exception of the Takht, it is by far the most prominent landmark near Srinagar and can be seen from a great distance. The wall, which surrounds it, is about three miles long and was built by Akbar, but the fort itself, now used as a State prison, is of considerably later construction. None of the buildings are of striking interest, and though massive, and originally of some considerable strength, are now much dilapidated.

At the other end of the town, and dominating the whole situation, is the Takht-i-Suleiman—the Throne of Soloman—rising almost exactly a thousand feet above the plain. The hill itself is bare and arid and is covered with boulders, interspersed here and there with patches of low scrub, among which a number of coveys of chukor lead protected lives. There is a pathway worn up its western side, which, though steep in places, presents no difficulties to anyone of ordinary activity.

The summit is crowned by a small, but exceedingly ancient Hindu temple, from the base of which a most extensive view of the valley and an excellent bird's-eye view of the city can be obtained. Far to the west the sheen of the Wular lake, merging imperceptibly into the blue of the hills that rise beyond, is faintly discernible. The snow peaks of the Pir Panjal girdle the whole southern horizon. Eastwards are the Pampur karewas, mauve-washed with crops of saffron, and to the north gaunt bare foot-hills rise steeply to the near-by horizon and hide from sight the real mountains that lie beyond. The city, embraced within the tortuous coils of the Jhelum and bounded by the waters of the Dal Lake, extends close up to the foot of the Takht, and from this view-point its every detail lies revealed.

The foundations of the temple itself are generally considered to be the oldest structure in Kashmir and to

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date back to at least a century before Christ, or, according to some authorities, more than a thousand years earlier still. But the superstructure is much more modern and is definitely Hindu in character. The interior contains the usual lingam and numbers of Hindus daily make the ascent of the hill to pay their devotions before it. At night the temple is lit and looks very effective from below.

Close to the foot of the Takht, on a small hill named the Gadi, or Footstool, which springs from the lower slopes of the Takht, is the Mission Hospital. The substantial buildings, surmounted by a conspicuous tower, which now exist, have gradually been evolved from the rough mud-floored wooden shed, which the State authorities grudgingly provided in 1865 at the insistence of the founder, Dr. Elmslie. For many years Dr. Arthur Neve, aided by his brother Dr. E. Neve, was in charge of this hospital. He earned an enormous reputation among the people, and, at his death some years ago, the inhabitants of Srinagar, so many of whom had been treated by him, unmistakably showed how much they grieved his loss.

For the first few years after the opening of the hospital the mission doctors had to overcome much opposition from the State officials, who were suspicious of the new ideas regarding the treatment of disease that they brought from Europe, and they had no one to help them in their struggle except completely unskilled native assistants. The number of patients which they treated, and the successful operations which they performed, in spite of these handicaps, is amazing. Gradually they overcame their difficulties, won the confidence of the people, and the grudging support of the State, and to-day the hospital has been firmly established for many years past. A visit will show how completely the mission doctors have triumphed over the obstacles put before them, and how

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their skill and unselfish labours have won for them the respect and confidence of all classes of the community.

In recent years between three and four thousand surgical operations have been performed annually.

§ 2.

The Dal Lake and Moghul Gardens.

This lovely sheet of water, which lies close on the outskirts of Srinagar, has been held to be the most beautiful in the world, and, even if this is admittedly an exaggeration, it would be a difficult task to name any other so beautiful a lake situated almost at the door of a large city. The lake itself is five miles long and nearly half as broad, but it is divided by causeways into two distinct portions, each of which has a number of minor off-shoots, and a large proportion of its surface is covered with floating gardens and beds of rushes, which grow in size as the summer advances, so that the general effect is then somewhat spoilt. But the ring of high mountains, which extend almost to the edge of the water on the northern and eastern sides, and which are still capped with snow when spring in the valley is far advanced, the delicate colouring of the poplar and willow trees, and those beautiful islets, Sona and Rupa Lank, all combine to render a very perfect picture of natural beauty ; a picture that is duplicated in every detail in the clear snow-fed waters of the lake.

Beautiful though the Dal lake is at every season of the year, it is, however, incomparably at its best in mid-summer, when the lotus is in flower. The masses of these great pink water-flowers, which cover large areas of the surface of the lake, are a wonderful sight, and though they may, perhaps,

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be seen to even better advantage at Manasbal, they bring thousands of admirers from the city to view them, and even attract some of the less ardent golfers from their cool links at Gulmarg

The floating gardens, which are mostly situated on the western side of the lake, are well worth a short visit. They are prepared in early spring when the level of the water is at its lowest. Rushes are cut and tied together in large masses, which are then towed to a suitable site, where they are bound in strips a few feet wide and perhaps forty or fifty yards in length. These strips are staked to the muddy floor of the lake, and water-weeds and a certain amount of earth are piled on the foundation so formed. A large variety of excellent vegetables are grown in these floating gardens and are sent daily into Srinagar, where they find a ready market.

Leaving the Dal Gate, which is the narrow entrance to the lake from the Tsunt-i-Kol, the canal which connects it with the Jhelum, and through which the water rushes with such force that it is frequently a matter of considerable difficulty to get the heavy and awkward house-boats through in safety, the visitor will proceed in his shikara down a long lane of clear water, bordered on either side by rows of moored house-boats and masses of tall rushes and water-weeds, until, after a mile or so, the lake opens out. To the right there are more house-boats, but in the opposite direction there is an extensive view and the full beauty of the lake can be first appreciated.

At Gagribal, lying almost in the shadow of the Takht, there is a large expanse of clear water, where, according to tradition, in the days when the shawl-making industry was at its height, the rarest and the best shawls were taken to be washed in the cold spring water, which was supposed to have the effect of imparting a peculiar softness to the

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fabric. To-day it is used chiefly as a bathing place and a raft is moored some way out for the bathers to rest on.

A word of warning regarding bathing in the Dal lake, or elsewhere, except in recognised bathing places, is desirable, as the water-weeds, which grow to a great length, are sometimes dangerous. Divers get entangled among them and cannot escape, and numerous drowning tragedies have occurred in this way.

Many people do not like bathing at Gagribal owing to the number of house-boats and doongas that are moored near by, and prefer, instead, to go to Nagim, which is undeniably cleaner and more pleasant, but has the disadvantage of being a good deal further away. A popular form of amusement, when the moon is full, is to arrange a bathing picnic at Nagim with supper afterwards, either on the lake, or at one of the dozens of attractive spots along its shores, and it would be difficult to imagine a pleasanter setting for such an affair.

Round the shores of the lake there are numbers of places of interest, the chief of which are, of course, the far-famed Moghul gardens. Most of these places can easily be reached by motor car along the road that runs past the foot of the Takht and through the village of Gupkar, but it is usually more convenient and less tiring to visit them by boat.

Starting on the circuit of the lake in an anti-clockwise direction, Chasma Shahi is the first place that should be visited. It is situated at some distance back from the lake and consists of a beautifully situated spring of clear water gushing from the mountain side, round which the Emperor Shahjehan laid out a garden and built a pavilion. A considerable area of land in this neighbourhood is covered with vines, and years ago, under the direction of an enterprising Frenchman, a very fair wine

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was prepared from these Kashmir grapes, but phylloxera appeared, the quality of the wine deteriorated and the industry is now moribund.

Two miles further and we come to the Nishat Bagh, which, owing to its beautiful situation and easy accessibility, is the most visited of the gardens and is a popular resort of the townsfolk, crowds of whom, dressed in their best clothes, resort there on Sundays and holidays.

The garden, which is enclosed by a high wall, covers a considerable area and extends far up the hill-side in a series of twelve terraces carpeted with turf. Behind tall bare mountains rise precipitously. A stream runs through the middle of the garden in a series of cascades and fountains, and, when the fountains are playing, the effect is, of course, vastly improved. The presence of this stream must have gladdened the eyes of the Moghul gardeners, whose chief difficulty in the plains was the provision of the copious supply of water, on which they relied so greatly to produce the effects that they admired.

The garden has suffered from years of neglect. Many of the pavilions are in ruins and, delightful though it still is, Nishat would no doubt bring tears to the eyes of its Moghul builders, who, as their sole crumb of comfort, would be forced to admire the incomparable chenars that adorn the upper terraces, which now are the chief glory of the garden, and which could have been no more than newly planted saplings in their day. These upper terraces rise to a considerable height above the lake and delightful views can be obtained from them framed in the foliage of the chenars.

A full understanding of these Moghul gardens, the ideas of their originators, and the difficulties that they had to contend with, will lead to a greater appreciation of their beauties, in the same way that a piece of fine music

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can only be fully understood by the educated listener. Mrs. C. M. Villiers Stuart's book, "The Gardens of the Great Moghuls," supplies this information, and makes one realise how it was that a formal garden, with conventional watercourses, fountains and cool pavilions, though entirely different from the natural effects that are generally sought after to-day, was the obvious form suited to the severe limits and the heat and dust of such places as Delhi and Lahore, in which they were perfected.

At Harwan, some way beyond the Nishat Bagh, and close to the Shalimar garden, the reservoir, which supplies Srinagar with drinking water, is situated at a distance of two miles or more back from the lake. Modern visitors, perhaps, may not realise what a boon this supply of pure water is to a city, which is for ever threatened by an outbreak of cholera in epidemic form, and how rarely such a supply is to be found in any but the largest eastern cities. The water is stored in an artificial reservoir, which was built in 1901. All human inhabitations have been removed from the catchment area of the valley in which it is situated, and no person is allowed to enter this area on any account, so that the chance of the supply being contaminated at its source is thus reduced to a minimum.

At Harwan, also, a successful trout hatchery has been established with ovæ sent from Europe. A number of streams in the valley have been stocked with trout in recent years, and some of the fish attain to a considerable size, rise freely to an artificial fly, and now afford very fair fishing. Near by there is the Maharajah's Model Farm, stocked with animals and poultry imported from England.

Shalimar Bagh, two miles further on, is not so well situated as the Nishat Bagh, as it is on almost level

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ground and is separated from the lake by a considerable expanse of low-lying land. It is approached along a narrow canal shaded by chenar trees. The garden is laid out in a series of low terraces and is surrounded by a wall. At the further end, which was reserved for the ladies of the Imperial harem, there is a very handsome pavilion of black marble with beautifully carved pillars standing in the middle of an artificial reservoir lined with marble. There is a tradition that this garden was once much larger than it is to-day, and the remains of ancient masonry outside the wall which surrounds it, and between the garden and the lake, lend weight to this assumption.

After leaving the Shalimar Bagh and passing the mouth of the Arrah, or Telbal river, which is navigable for some distance from its mouth, Nasim Bagh, on the western side of the lake, is reached. Nasim is now hardly more than a park, as the wall that surrounded it has almost disappeared and the ruins of its buildings are hidden by low mounds of grass-covered earth. But its fine chenar trees, now, alas, far past their prime, and its air of ancient neglect are so completely in accord with the indefinable melancholy of a still summer evening, that it is, perhaps, at times the most charming spot on the shores of this delightful lake.

Some little distance from the Nasim Bagh there is the large mosque, or ziarat, of Hazratbal, which is celebrated as containing a supposed hair of the Prophet, purchased, so tradition has it, by a wealthy merchant for a lakh of rupees a thousand years ago. Festivals are held here from time to time, and twice a year, in May and August, the hair is produced before vast numbers of devout Mahommedans assembled together from all parts of the valley.

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Hazratbal virtually completes the circuit of the lake, for, although it is still almost an hour's journey back to the Dal Gate, the remainder of the distance lies through a canal and a series of small open spaces of water, and here, except for the ever-changing display of the domestic life of the inhabitants of the city, there is not much of interest to detain the sight-seer.

§ 3

The lower reaches of the Jhelum.

After spending some time in Srinagar and its immediate neighbourhood, the visitor will probably wish to see something of the surrounding country. Several expeditions can be made by motor, but most of these will of necessity be in the direction of Islamabad, as the western portion of the valley is poorly served by roads and transport by water has generally to be relied upon. The most comfortable way to explore this part of Kashmir is to engage two or three extra boatmen and to take your house-boat with you. This method has the added advantage of imposing no limits on the amount of luggage that can be taken, and gives none of the bother of pitching and striking camp and arranging for transport every day. In this manner a week or more can be spent very pleasantly travelling slowly in the direction of Baramulla and visiting the numerous places of interest en route.

The scenery is glorious; the house-boat slowly drifts along the placid reaches of the river with scarcely a sound, and, as a change from the noise and bustle of everyday life, nothing could be more complete.

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After passing Seventh Bridge and the weir at Chattabal, which was constructed some years ago, in order to keep the level of the water in the Jhelum sufficiently high to permit of navigation throughout the year, the river widens, the outskirts of the town are rapidly left behind, and a flat and highly-cultivated country-side takes its place. Near at hand, clumps of stately chenars with their heavy masses of foliage, and the regular rows of poplar trees, lining the near-by Srinagar-Rawalpindi road, are the only features that break the flatness of the view, but the background of the surrounding snow-clad mountains, which completely encircle the valley, effectively prevents the scenery ever from becoming dull.

Far away to the left, the shoulder among the pine forests of the Pir Panjal, where Gulmarg nestles, can easily be distinguished on a clear day, and, in the opposite direction, the low, but conspicuous hill, overlooking Manasbal lake, the mouth of the Sind valley and Haramouk's forbidding turrets form conspicuous features of a varied and delightful landscape.

Shadipore will be reached in about four hours. Here the Sind river, which has grown into quite a considerable stream, flows into the Jhelum and the name of the place signifies this joining, or marriage of the waters. Just by the confluence there is a small islet, carefully protected with revetments from erosion by the river, on which a chenar tree grows, which is held in great reverence by the Hindus. At Shadipore there are a number of fine trees on the banks of the river, and pleasant shady places where house-boats can be moored.

The waters of the Sind river, derived from the melting snows at the head of the valley and the glaciers of Sonamarg, are far colder than those of the Jhelum

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and this helps to keep the surroundings cool and fresh even during the height of summer.

A further two hours' journey brings the massive bridge of Sumbal into sight, and here again there are some excellent camping sites and secluded mooring places for house-boats. In the autumn very fair snipe shooting may be obtained in the surrounding marshes and rice fields, and the fishing, too, is good. Some distance below Sumbal bridge there is a canal, which connects the river with Manasbal lake. Manasbal is well worth a visit, as, although quite small, it is beautifully situated, and the surface is not so much obstructed by water-weeds as that of other Kashmir lakes. During the summer months, when the lotus is in flower, Manasbal is at its best, and, as there always seems to be a breeze, it is not nearly so hot and oppressive as other low-lying places in the valley.

The Srinagar-Bandipur road, which is suitable for motors during most of the year, passes close by the lake.

Considering its position it is not surprising that Manasbal was chosen as a site for a garden by the Moghul emperors, who had unerring taste in selecting a background of pronounced natural beauty to contrast with their formal lay-out. The site on which the garden used to be, however, is now completely neglected and but few and scanty traces of it remain.

After leaving Sumbal there is nothing very much of interest to be seen until we arrive at the Wular lake, several hours' journey further down the Jhelum. This lake is the largest in India, but much of it is very shallow and is covered with weed during the late summer and autumn. In the winter, when the hills are in the grip of frost and the Jhelum shrinks far below its summer level, large areas dry out. It is important to visit the Wular at the right time of year, that is to say in spring or

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early autumn, as during the hot summer months flies and mosquitoes make the place intolerable. The lake, like all expanses of water situated close to, or among high mountains, is subject to sudden violent squalls. These storms are greatly feared by the Kashmiri boatmen, and not without reason. For when their heavy unwieldy house-boats, or deeply-laden doongas, are caught in a high wind, they become quite unmanageable, and with their low free-board, they are easily sunk. For this reason it is necessary to cross the lake during the night or early morning, when storms are of rare occurrence, or else to avoid the crossing by making use of the Nuru canal, which connects Shadipore with Sopor at the further end of the lake. This canal is only navigable when the level of the river is high, but, when there is sufficient water, it affords the quickest and most direct route by boat between Srinagar and Baramulla, and, as it only skirts the shores of the Wular lake for a short distance, it is sheltered from sudden storms.

The chief products of the lake are wildfowl, of which vast flocks occur in the autumn and winter and for which there is a limited market in Srinagar, fish and the singhara nut, which grows in enormous quantities. When it is in bloom its white flowers float on the surface of the water, but later, after the nuts have ripened, they sink to the bottom and, during the winter months, when the water is low, enormous quantities are dredged up. The nuts, after being boiled, are ground up into a kind of coarse flour, or else parched, when they form a nutritious food somewhat similar to porridge.

One of the methods used by the fishermen of the Wular lake is curious. A small fleet of boats, each with a crew of four or five men, collects together. With each boat there is a large crescent-shaped net, something like an outsize shrimping-net. When they arrive at the fishing grounds,

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all the boats, except two, form into a large semi-circle and sink their nets in a row with over-lapping sides. The two remaining boats then move quietly off to a distance of about forty yards in front of the semi-circle, and, at a given signal; paddle, furiously splashing, towards the waiting fleet, while a small boy violently beats the side of the boat with a stick. This noise causes the fish in front of the two boats to rush into the row of waiting nets, where they are easily secured. The whole operation is most amusing to watch, particularly in the winter, when the crews are all swathed in blankets and are crouched over their kangras.

Near to the entrance of the lake, at Baniera, there is an island, or lank, on which there are some old ruins of a Hindu temple. There is not very much of the building left. Several pillars and the remains of one or two arches, on which there are traces of weather-worn carving, are all that can now be seen. In the winter the island may be reached dry-shod.

Bandipur, a small town, which marks the beginning of the Gilgit road, and which is the starting place for shooting expeditions to Astor, and late in the season to Baltistan, is situated close to the margin of the lake at its north-east end.

Before leaving the lake Shakr-ud-din is perhaps worth visiting. It is a prominently situated hill, which juts out from the surrounding mountains and falls steeply to the shores of the lake on its western side. It is about seven hundred feet high and there is a sacred tomb or ziarat on the top, from which a very comprehensive view can be obtained.

Several miles to the west of Shakr-ud-din is the outlet to the Jhelum, with Sopor, an insignificant town and the starting place for expeditions to the Lolab, and years ago,

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before the days of motor transport, to Gulmarg, situated near its mouth. Sopor is a pleasant healthy spot with good mahseer fishing to be obtained near by. Twelve miles further down the river we come to Baramulla, moderate sized straggling town that is not of much interest to the sight-seer, and which marks the western limit of navigation on the Jhelum.

From Sopor, if at all possible, a short expedition to Nagmarg, or the Lolab valley should be made. During the early summer the first portion of the journey to the Lolab can be done in comfort by taking a boat up the Pohru river, in which there is usually sufficient water at that time of year, and in the valley itself there are several forest huts, which can be used if permission from the Divisional Forest Officer is first obtained. Transport and shelter are therefore matters of little difficulty to arrange.

The scenery in the Lolab has been compared with that of a southern English county. The wide expanse of meadows, the scattered villages, half-hidden in clumps of walnut, chenar, and apple trees, and the low forest-clad hills which surround it, form an attractive and peaceful scene of rural beauty, with only the distant snows as a reminder that it is really situated in the depths of the Himalayas.

§ 4

The Sind Valley.

A road passable for motor traffic runs through Srinagar, past Hari Parbat, and thence along the narrow neck of land between the Dal and Anchar lakes, and through the retty little village of Gandarbal, until, after sixteen

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miles, it arrives at Woyil suspension bridge. This bridge across the Sind river marks the end of the motor road, and thereafter the traveller has either to ride on horse-back, or to rely upon his legs to carry him.

The first portion of the journey up the Sind valley is frequently accomplished in a house-boat, or doonga, which proceeds down the Jhelum as far as Shadipore and thence up the Sind river to Gandarbal, beyond which there is not sufficient water for boats of such a size. At Gandarbal there are usually a number of house-boats moored, and though the place itself is pretty enough, and the scenery, except for the background of mountains, much like that of the Thames valley, it seems to be just far enough from Srinagar to be inconvenient and not far enough away to be really secluded.

The Sind valley has been used as a trading route to and from Central Asia for centuries past, and caravans, loaded with merchandise from Kashgar and Turkestan, have wound their slow way along its hill-sides and exchanged greetings with others returning homewards since the dim dawn of history. To-day, except that the road is perhaps in somewhat better repair and there are a few more bridges over the side streams, the appearance of the valley must be substantially the same as it was a thousand years ago. And, if we except the thin line of telegraph wire connecting Leh and Skardu with the outer world, which forms so insignificant a feature of the landscape that it may easily pass completely unnoticed, there is no sign of the inventions and progress of the twentieth century.

Sonamarg, where there is always a number of Europeans in camp during the summer, is situated towards the head of the valley, which suddenly comes to an end nine miles beyond, close to the tiny hamlet of Baltal at the foot of the Zoji La, where the road to Central Asia climbs across the

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Great Himalayan Range. This pass, though comparatively speaking low, has an evil and well-earned reputation for sudden storms and destructive avalanches, and every year it takes its toll from among the travellers who use it.

Officially, it is four marches from Srinagar to Sonamarg, and one further to Baltal, and coolies will have to be paid accordingly. The actual journey, however, can be made in much less than five days, as there is no difficulty in reaching Kangan, which is twenty-four miles from Srinagar, by the first evening, if a motor car is taken as far as Woyil bridge. The next day, a march of thirteen miles along a fair road will take the traveller to Gund, where there is an indifferent dâk bungalow. If tents have been brought, there is a suitable camping ground three miles further on near the outskirts of a village called Reyil, and within a long day's march of Baltal. However, unless time is of importance, the regular stages will usually be found quite sufficient.

For the first few miles after leaving Woyil bridge the scenery is not particularly impressive. The valley is wide, the road dusty and most of the surrounding hills bare, but beyond Kangan the valley closes in and some fresh view catches the eye at every turn.

Several typical Kashmiri villages are passed and these are always picturesque in spite of the dirt and the odours that enfold them. Shaded by walnut, mulberry and chenar trees, which belong to the State and may not be cut down without permission, the tall wooden-framed houses with steep pointed roofs, the accompanying bee-hive granaries, and, on the outskirts, the clumps of mauve irises, make a pleasant and attractive scene.

In the autumn the upper stories of the houses are festooned with corn-cobs, pumpkins and apples drying in the last of the sunshine, and at the first hint of winter the

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cattle are brought in and stabled on the ground floor. The inhabitants then retire above and bask in the warm fumes that rise from the cattle, intensified by the burning charcoal of their kangras, and only venture out when driven by necessity.

The right-hand side of the valley, when marching towards Sonamarg, is heavily wooded, but on the opposite side, along which the road chiefly lies, the hill-sides have little vegetation, except here and there an old walnut, or a few mulberry trees clustering round a village, or occasional clumps of wild roses, which are a blaze of short-lived beauty during the early summer. This curious distribution of the vegetation is typical of the whole valley of Kashmir and is an ever-present reminder that, however temperate the climate may appear to be, in reality the sun is still powerful and the tropics not far distant. It is, of course, due to the northern and eastern faces, which are sheltered from the hot sun, alone being able to store their moisture long enough to allow of a luxuriant forest growth. The northern slopes of the Pir Panjal, along the whole length of which extends a belt of magnificent evergreen forest, in contrast to the mountains on the opposite side of the valley, which face south and are almost bare, afford a good example of this on a large scale. The rule is borne out even on the Takht, whose southern and western faces are a mass of tumbled boulders, while on the small northern face there is a flourishing copse of fir trees.

Between Kangan and Gund the valley narrows and the road crosses the Sind river more than once, but the number of crossings varies, as the bridges are frequently damaged by floods, and are repaired, or not, according to the likelihood of some distinguished person using the road. If they are not repaired, the traveller has to find his way

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as best he can along the banks of the river to the next crossing place. Gund is situated at a height of nearly seven thousand feet above sea level and the days are pleasantly cool even in the height of summer, while the nights are often distinctly chilly.

Some miles further on the road enters the well-known Gagangiyer gorge and winds its way along the face of the cliffs a few feet above the river, which is here a rushing torrent, closely confined between rocky walls. Above the road, cliffs, bare except for a few stunted and twisted trees, rise almost sheer in stupendous majesty for thousands of feet to ragged snow-crowned mountain tops. Snow lies at the foot of the gorge until late in the spring. During many months of the year the road is liable to be overwhelmed by avalanches falling from above, and the river flows silent, buried to the depth of many feet in snow-drifts and avalanche beds.

This grim canyon ends abruptly and the road crosses a substantial wooden bridge and emerges into the long open valley, which, together with a few permanent buildings clustered at the far end, is known as Sonamarg—the meadow of gold. Many years ago Sonamarg was a strong rival of Gulmarg as a summer resort for European visitors, but the difficulty of access and its greater distance from Srinagar were decisive factors that told against its popularity. Beautifully situated though it undoubtedly is, with its side valleys flecked with flowers and crowned with hanging glaciers, it cannot rival that incomparable view of Nanga Parbat, towering thousands of feet above the general level of the Great Himalayan Range, which forms one of the chief attractions of Gulmarg.

During the summer months there are always a fair number of camps dotted about the marg and in the surrounding woods, and a few very pleasant days can be

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spent there. There is not a great deal to do, however, and a whole summer in Sonamarg is not to be recommended. Sonamarg makes a very good centre for walks, but the most interesting of them take two to four days and this necessitates camping. It would also make an excellent head-quarters for a climbing party, and, if a comfortable base camp were arranged there and a light camp taken in whatever direction was necessary, some excellent climbing should be obtainable on the numerous fine mountains within easy reach, most of which, with the exception of Haramouk and Kolahoi, have never yet been climbed and are not even distinguished by a name.

Nine miles beyond Sonamarg, at the foot of the Zoji La, there is a narrow gorge-like valley leading eastwards from Baltal, at the head of which lies the sacred cave of Amarnath, which is held in extreme reverence by Hindus throughout India. The actual object of their worship is a frozen spring within the cave, and in August thousands of devout pilgrims make their arduous way to this lonely spot. Many of them are ill-clad and old, or weak, and numbers die on the road. The route followed by these pilgrims is through Pahlgam and the Liddar valley, as the way from Baltal is only passable until about the middle of June, when the frozen beds of snow at the foot of the gorge are still intact, and along which a path can be found. Later in the year, when the snow has melted, a rushing stream covers the bed of the gorge and the route becomes practically impassable.

The return journey to and from Baltal can be made in one day, but an early start is advisable if this is to be attempted, and the party should all be in condition fit enough to cover the best part of twenty miles of rough mountain paths between sunrise and nightfall.

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Beyond Baltal the road, which is now no more than a narrow bridle path, begins to ascend steeply, the valley closes in and the road is cut along the face of steep cliffs that fall almost sheer from a great height to the bottom of the ravine. The single telegraph wire leaves the road and sweeps from side to side in dizzy curves across the void. The top of the pass is at a height of 11,578 feet above the sea and is by far the lowest gap in the main Himalayan back-bone, but the actual summit is quite inconspicuous and there is only a very gentle drop on the northern side. The pass marks, as it were, the second step up from the low-lying plains of India to the high, cold deserts of Central Asia, between which the Kashmir valley is sandwiched at a moderate level and blessed with a temperate climate.

The change that takes place in the short distance between Baltal and the top of the pass is very great, and has been commented on by many writers. This contrast is most striking when coming from the north in the early summer. Then the traveller at mid-day may be battling with a snow-storm in a barren land, where vegetation occurs only along the banks of occasional sheltered streams, and by evening will have arrived at Baltal, with the cattle of the Gujar herdsmen grazing on the lush new grass, and the cuckoo calling as loudly and persistently as if it were among the woods and water meadows of some quiet English county.

On the way back from Sonamarg, if time permits, a short excursion should be made from the main road to see the ruins at Wangat. The path to Wangat branches off a few miles below Kangan and it is possible to make the return journey from Kangan, or even Gandarbal, in one day, but from Gandarbal this would be a tiring excursion and it would be better to take a camp.

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The expedition can be extended along a pleasant, though rough path, leading from Wangat to the beautiful lake of Gangabal, which is considered sacred by the Hindus as the source of the Ganges and is visited by them in large numbers during the month of August. The route continues close under the precipices of Haramouk, in whose shadow, according to Kashmiri superstition, no poisonous reptile can exist, and thence down into the Erin nullah. This expedition affords some magnificent views of the Haramouk glaciers and snow-fields, but, as much of the way is across high ground, it should not be attempted too early in the year.

The ruins at Wangat, though impressive by reason of their massive yet graceful proportions, are sadly neglected and now form a bivouac in the summer months for Gujar herdsmen, who bring their flocks to these upland pastures to escape from the parched and arid foot-hills that border on the plains, and to find grazing that will keep their beasts in good condition until the weather once again turns cool.

These men are born shepherds and take the greatest pains with their flocks; but they are equally the born enemies of the fine forests that clothe the lower slopes of the hills. A common practice, in which they indulge, is to light an enormous fire at the foot of a tree, at which to cook their food and in front of which they sleep. The trunk throws forward the heat and so a comfortable bivouac is formed with little effort, but the fire destroys the growth, and the forests are full of the skeletons of grand trees that have been destroyed in this way.

Four days should be allowed, if possible, for the trip from Kangan to the Erin nullah, though by making longer marches, it can, of course, be completed in considerably less time.

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§ 5

The Eastern End of the Valley.

The eastern end of the valley contains a number of places of interest that should be visited, if time permits. Most of them are best reached by car, as boats can only proceed as far as Islamabad, and the journey by water is slow and not particularly interesting. On the way to Islamabad, which is thirty-two miles distant from Srinagar along a very fair road, Pandrittan, Pampur and the ruins at Avantipur should be visited. Beyond lie Bawan, Martand, the Liddar valley, Achabal and the spring at Vernag, which is considered sacred as the source of the Jhelum. There are interesting ruins in a number of places, besides those at Avantipur and Martand, and the scenery in general is extremely attractive.

These massive ruins, which are to be seen in various parts of the valley, particularly at its eastern end, cannot fail to exercise the wonder of the most casual passer-by, so different are they from anything that is built, or even exists in Kashmir to-day. They are, indeed, quite unlike anything that is to be found elsewhere in India. Superficially they bear a far stronger resemblance to classical than to oriental architecture, though, when they are examined more closely, it becomes obvious to the expert eye that they have great and fundamental differences from the accepted classical conventions.

Archæologists have been able to place beyond any reasonable doubt that these temples were built when Kashmir was predominantly Hindu, and that they were dedicated to the worship of Siva. The simple ritual that this cult involves demands but little space, so that the

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mallness of the interiors comes as a surprise whens compared with their massive outlines. In the far distant past Hinduism in Kashmir is supposed to have absorbed the primitive snake worship of the pre-historic inhabitants and many of these temples show distinct traces of such an origin. These snake gods were supposed to live in springs, or nags, some of which are still considered sacred to this day. And several of the Kashmir temples stand surrounded with water, the under-lying idea being, it is supposed, that they would thus be more immediately under the protection of the nags to whom they were dedicated.

The standard work on Kashmir Archæology is Cole's "Ancient Buildings in Kashmir." Sir Aurel Stein's "Kashmir's Rajatarangini" should also be consulted by any serious student of these ancient ruins and the history that is bound up in them.

The nearest of these ruined temples is situated at Pandrittan, three miles outside Srinagar on the left of the road and just beyond the new State barracks. Pandrittan is also supposed to be the site of the original city of Srinagar, founded by Asoka, but there is no longer any trace of such a city to be seen.

Pampur, situated eight miles from Srinagar, is a small dilapidated town, where there is a pretty camping ground among a grove of chenar trees near to the river, and a house, which is occasionally occupied by the Maharajah. Two or three miles away, close to the foot of the hills, there are some sacred springs, which have medicinal properties, and, on the other side of the river and six or seven miles distant from it, is the temple of Payech. This temple, though exceedingly small, is in a far better state of repair than any of the other ancient shrines in the valley, and, although it lies somewhat off the beaten track, a fair road makes

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it quite easily accessible, if an expedition is made specially to see it. The building only measures eight feet square, but its isolated situation on rising ground, its elegant outline and massive construction, consisting, as it does, of but ten stones, two comprising the roof and eight the walls, lend to it a certain impressiveness that is quite out of proportion to its size.

The most generally known and widely appreciated feature of the Pampur district, however, is the extensive fields of saffron, which come into flower during October and early November. The saffron plant is a perennial and in appearance much like an ordinary crocus. It is cultivated in small square beds and the yellow matter, from which the saffron is prepared, is taken from the top of the pistil. When the fields are all in flower, the masses of mauve blossoms are very striking and attract numbers of sight-seers from Srinagar. The saffron itself is much used as a condiment and as a pigment for the caste marks on the foreheads of Hindus.

The ancient city of Avantipur is reached after eighteen miles. It was once an important place and the residence of the famous Kashmir king, Avantivarma, after whom it is named, but to-day it has degenerated to no more than a small and dirty village with the ruins of its famous temples as its sole distinction. These ruins are only second to those at Martand in size. They used to be buried to a depth of several feet, but they were fully excavated a number of years ago and now reveal a far greater wealth of detail and richness of carving than is to be found at Martand, or indeed anywhere else in Kashmir.

The large village of Bijbihara is situated three miles short of Islamabad on the banks of the Jhelum. On the opposite side of the river, which is spanned by a rickety wooden bridge beside the remains of a more massive

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one of stone, there are some extremely ancient Hindu ruins. Here the Liddar river joins the Jhelum, thereby almost doubling its volume. Above the confluence the main stream is only navigable for a short distance From Bijbihara a road leads up the Liddar valley to Pahlgam.

Islamabad is the second largest town in Kashmir and contains about twenty thousand inhabitants, but it is squalid and dilapidated in appearance and only too obviously lacks an effective system of sanitation. It stands beneath a very prominent hill, from the foot of which gushes a large spring, called Anantnag, a name that is also applied by Hindus to the whole town. There are a number of other springs in the vicinity, one of which is strongly sulphurous, and there is also a large sacred tank swarming with fish of the carp family. These fish are sacred and are never allowed to be caught, with the result that they have become quite tame and feed voraciously on the surface when visitors throw them food. The most prominent building in the place is the Maharajah's Palace, at which he stays on his way to and from his winter capital at Jammu, when proceeding by the Banihal route.

There is a considerable weaving industry in the town, and quite attractive embroidered rugs and table-cloths are produced. It also derives a certain importance from being the starting point of the road that leads to Jammu across the Banihal pass, but the visitor will take away with him the impression of a dirty and unattractive town sunk in an age-long lethargy.

From Islamabad several short expeditions can be made in the course of a single day, to Achabal and Vernag, or, through Bawan and Martand, to the Liddar valley. Further afield, in the Wardwan and Kishtwar, there is

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much that is charming, but these places are several days' journey away and a visit to them entails considerable preparation and all the paraphernalia of a camp.

Achabal, seven miles distant from Islamabad along a good road, is delightfully situated at the foot of an extensive system of low pine-covered hills, that hold numbers of Kashmir stag during the autumn and winter months. There is a comfortable rest-house and several good camping sites, which are usually occupied during the summer. Close to the rest-house there is a small Moghul garden laid out, so tradition has it, by the Emperor Jehangir and kept in a fair state of repair by the State authorities. The stream, which runs through this garden and supplies the usual fountains and waterfalls, flows from a spring that gushes out of the mountain immediately behind, and it is thought that the water of this spring is derived from the Bringh river, part of which disappears on the far side of this mountain down a cleft in its limestone bed.

There is good trout fishing to be obtained near Achabal, but a special permit to fish is necessary.

Sixteen miles from Islamabad, along the Jammu road and close to the foot of the Banihal pass, is the sacred spring of Vernag, beautifully situated below a range of thickly wooded hills. The spring flows into a huge and exceedingly deep octagonal stone tank, in which there are thousands of sacred fish, and is surrounded by a Moghul garden. Vernag was the Emperor Jehangir's favourite resort, and, when he knew that his end was near, he desired to be carried there to die.

From the top of the Banihal pass some magnificent views can be obtained on a clear day.

Bawan and Martand lie in the opposite direction towards the mouth of the Liddar valley. At a short distance from Islamabad the road to Bawan leads past several

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low hills, on the sides of which distinct beach marks may be seen in various places, and these are cited as evidence in confirmation of the theory that, in the remote past, the whole of the Kashmir valley was covered to the depth of many feet by an enormous lake.

At Bawan there is a delightfully situated camping ground among a grove of very large chenars. Close by there is a Hindu temple with a sacred tank that holds an enormous number of fish, which come to the surface to be fed at the sight of visitors. At Bhamju, about a mile beyond the camping ground, there are some curious caves, which, though undoubtedly of natural origin, are held in superstitious awe by the natives, who believe that they were created by supernatural powers. The biggest of them leads a considerable distance into the hill-side, but after a short way the passage becomes so low and narrow that progress is difficult, and, as it eventually peters out, there is not much point in exploring its recesses. In a small chamber near the entrance there are the bones of some unknown hermit, who used it as his cell. A short distance further on there is another smaller cave containing a Hindu shrine. The entrance, from which a very fine view can be obtained, is about a hundred feet above the ground and is reached by a flight of insecure steps.

The famous ruins of Martand are at some distance from Bawan. Though, perhaps, they cannot be numbered among the really famous ruins of the world, the position that they occupy, standing alone on an elevated plateau overlooking a wide expanse of the valley, is exceedingly impressive. The temple is assigned to the reign of Lalitaditya and must therefore have been built about 700 A.D. The courtyard that surrounds it is really more remarkable than the temple itself, and it is thought that the whole of the space so enclosed was originally filled

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with water almost to the bases of the columns and that access to the temple was gained along a raised pathway.

The Liddar valley, perhaps the most beautiful in Kashmir, opens out beyond Martand. For the first few miles the valley is broad and fully cultivated, but it soon closes in and grand mountains rise steeply on either side affording a variety of rugged views. Pahlgam, twenty-seven miles from Islamabad, is the chief village. There is a fair road for the first fifteen miles and the remainder of the distance forms a beautiful walk, or ride, along the forest-clad hill-sides.

In July and August hundreds of pilgrims make their way up this valley to the sacred cave of Amarnath, which lies at its head. Pahlgam used to be a popular summer resort, but nowadays numbers of Indian invalids use it as a sanitarium during the summer and this has detracted not a little from its charm. Close to Pahlgam the valley divides into two—one branch running north-west in the direction of Lidarwat and Kolahoi, and the other north-east to the cave of Amarnath. At the head of the Kolahoi branch there is a fine glacier several miles long, which almost encircles the mountain and has its origin far up among the eternal snows.

Kolahoi itself rises to a height of 17,799 feet and is a most impressive peak somewhat resembling the Matterhorn. It was first climbed by Dr. E. F. Neve and Lieut. Mason in 1912. They found the ascent long and extremely difficult, and since then it has not again been seriously attempted.

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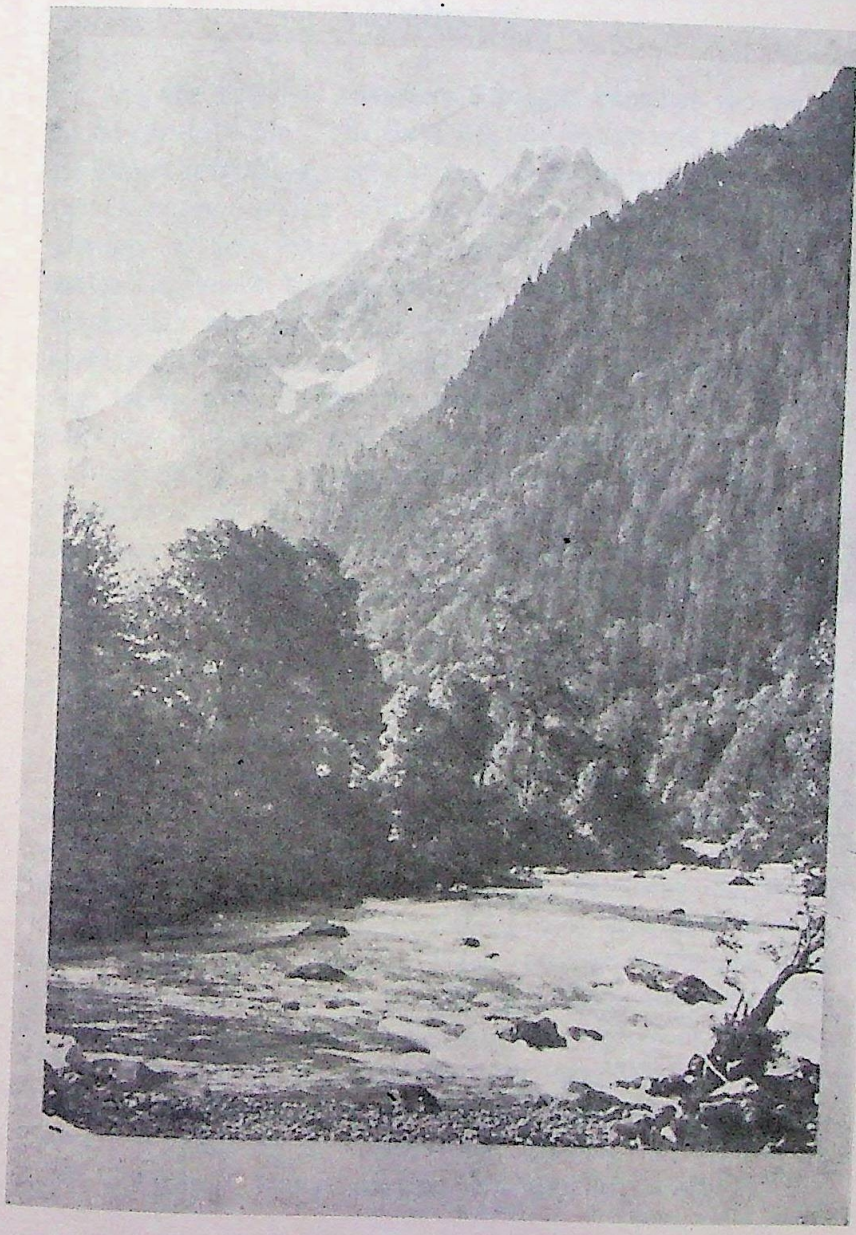

THE LIDDAR VALLEY.

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§ 6

Gulmarg

As the summer advances Srinagar becomes too warm to be comfortable. The days are oppressive and the nights no longer refreshing, and Society begins to consider moving to Gulmarg, which fills up towards the end of May, though a few hardy visitors go there much earlier, when the snow has hardly left the golf course and an occasional belated ski-runner may still be discovered lurking on Killanmarg. Gulmarg is situated in an undulating basin about three thousand feet above the valley and two thousand feet above Tangmarg, which is the village where the motor road from Srinagar ends, and is surrounded by extensive forests of pine. Above, the main range of the Pir Panjal rises to a height of over fourteen thousand feet and below the wooded hills fall steeply to the level of the plain.

The distance to Tangmarg from Srinagar is twenty-four miles along a good road, and motors and lorries for heavy luggage can easily be hired for the journey. From Tangmarg a well graded pony-track leads up to Gulmarg, and tats or dandies can be obtained to carry those who are not sufficiently young or energetic enough to make the ascent on foot. The road branches off from the main Baramulla road about eight miles out of Srinagar, close to the famous Hokra Jheel, and for the last few miles rises steadily, until Tangmarg is reached, whence the remainder of the journey must be completed either on foot or by pony. There are two routes up from Tangmarg, the main bridle path, which zig-zags and has an easy gradient throughout, and the coolie track, which runs straight up the face of the khud, and, though considerably shorter, is very steep.

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At Gulmarg there are all the usual amenities of a hill station, and most of the hotels, shops and boarding houses of Srinagar open branches there during the short summer season, which lasts from June until about the end of September. The Maharajah has a house there, and there is the Residency, church and club, with two golf courses and several hard tennis courts, so altogether life in Gulmarg need never be dull. The climate is delightfully cool even in the middle of the summer, but the one great drawback is the heavy rainfall, which far exceeds that of the valley.

Most of the visitors live in wooden huts dotted about the low hill-sides bordering on the marg. These huts are really bungalows with several rooms. They are usually fairly well furnished, and can be made very comfortable at small expense. One of moderate size can be rented for about eight hundred rupees for the season, and sometimes less. There is also Nedou's hotel and several boarding houses for those who prefer to avoid the worries of house-keeping. Living is slightly more expensive than in Srinagar as all supplies have to be carried up the hill.

Golf is the chief form of amusement and competitions are held almost daily. There are two first-class courses, which are certainly the best in India, and golf in Gulmarg is played in surroundings that are almost English, even to the frequent rain. A big tennis tournament is held each year and dances take place at Nedou's hotel several times a week.

For people who prefer the simple life there are innumerable delightful walks through the forest, which extends for miles on either hand, or over the open uplands between the tree-line and the snows. Through the clearings in the forest and from the lower slopes of Apharwat there are incomparable views of the valley,

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Sunset Peak and the stupendous mass of Nanga Parbat, rising to a height of 26,620 feet, nearly ninety miles away to the north.

Nanga Parbat is the ninth highest mountain in Asia and one of the very few really great mountains that are easily visible from a centre of civilisation. It is also one of the few great peaks that is a peak in the literal sense. This, coupled with its isolated position, makes it one of the most imposing mountains in the world, for it towers more than nine thousand feet above every summit within a radius of sixty miles. Wonderful though it appears from Gulmarg, it is even more impressive when viewed from the north, where the Indus flows along the bed of a stupendous gorge, and an observer on the further side can see towering above him no less than twenty-three thousand feet of cliff and crag and glacier, culminating at a distance of a few miles in this glorious summit ; a view, perhaps, that is not equalled, and certainly is not excelled, by any in the world, but which, owing to its remoteness, can be seen only by a fortunate few.

There are several longer expeditions which can be made in the course of a single day : down the steep sides of the Ferozepore nullah, to picnic beside its icy waters, in which there are numbers of small snow trout : or up the further side to the ruined tower at Damdama : or to Killanmarg and over the top of Apharwat to the Frozen Lakes on the further side. It is a long expedition to the top of Apharwat and entails a climb of over five thousand feet, but the masses of flowers in the woods and on the lower slopes above the tree-line, and the magnificent views from the summit well repay the effort.

Further afield a number of delightful trips can be made in the direction of the Tosh Maidan, the Chor Panjal pass and Tutakuti. Coolies for transport are sometimes difficult

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to obtain and those taken from Gulmarg will probably have to be kept throughout the trip, as places where others can be obtained are few. Applications for coolies should be addressed to the Tehsildar at Gulmarg. The usual rate is from eight annas to a rupee for each march, according to its length and difficulty.

The Pir Panjal range has been much neglected, but, when the rainy mid-summer months are over and the air is crisp with the promise of autumn, a short trip along its northern side is a delightful experience. The marches are short and easy, in the woods and upland meadows, deserted for nine months of every year, there are masses of glorious flowers, and, rising above, are friendly snow peaks, interspersed with rocky crags and lovely mountain tarns, and there is none of the overwhelming size and desolation of the further Himalayas.

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CHAPTER III.

Beyond the Passes—Over the Zoji La—The Indus Valley Route to Skardu—The Gilgit Road—The Deosai Route to Skardu—Ladakh—Kishtwar—Camping Equipment.

§ 1.

Beyond the Passes.

BEYOND the confines of the Kashmir valley and across the passes that guard its northern boundary, there lies a cold and barren land, sparsely inhabited, with each small community isolated to a degree unknown in Europe by high mountain ranges and deep unbridged rivers. Travel is slow in these remote parts, and life arduous, but, in spite of the rigour of the climate and the discomforts that must be endured, the charm of a journey through them far outweighs the disadvantages. The newly-pitched, but ordered camp each evening, the daily changing scenery, the cheerful, childish coolies, ever ready to respond with a laugh to the feeblest of jokes, the acrid smell of wood-smoke rising on the chilly evening air, all enjoyed with the keenness born of robust bodily health, leave memories that never fade.

A journey to these distant parts of the Kashmir State takes considerable time and entails careful preparation. But provided the usual routes are followed, and provided the journey is made during the summer months, when the passes are free from snow, it will not prove unduly expensive, and is physically within the powers of anyone, who is fit enough to walk ten miles for a number of days on end, and whose spirit of enterprise rises above incidental minor discomforts.

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Before making such a journey it is necessary to decide whether solitude, except for the company of native servants, will be tolerable for days on end, or whether a travelling companion must be found. In the latter case, if no tried and trusted friend is available, the advice offered by Vigne, a traveller of much experience, who, in the thirties of last century, journeyed extensively throughout the Punjab, Kashmir and the then semi-independent states of Ladakh and Baltistan, should be borne in mind. In his book he says, "I think that, when two persons are going to travel together, they should agree beforehand to give each other credit for the fullest discernment of reasons, the most complete capability for giving advice and the most practised powers of retort and repartee upon all occasions; and in this manner I think an agreeable and gentlemanly equilibrium of temper may always be preserved." Such advice cannot be lightly disregarded, when tempers are tried by the mishaps and delays of the road, so many of which appear to be totally unnecessary, but which cannot be avoided in oriental countries. Otherwise it is far better to travel alone.

The question of equipment and stores must also be carefully considered, as, once Srinagar has been left behind, nothing can be obtained, except at great expense and after much delay, until Leh or Skardu is reached, and the resources of these two towns are distinctly limited. At the end of this chapter there is a list of essential items without which a reasonably comfortable journey cannot be made: extras must be included to suit individual tastes and purses.

The most important routes from Kashmir proper are up the Sind Valley, over the Zoji La and thence to Kargil, where the road forks, one branch going to Skardu, the capital of Baltistan, and the other to Leh, which is the

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A Ladakhi Merchant at the summit of the Zoji La.

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chief town in Ladakh; the direct route to Skardu by Gurais and the desolate plains of Deosai, which can only be crossed during the few months of mid-summer, when the ground is bare of snow; the military road starting from Bandipore and leading across the Burzil pass to Gilgit; or, from the other end of the valley, over the Sinthan pass to Kishtwar, the easternmost district of Kashmir.

These main routes superficially cover the whole of the outlying provinces, but in each district there are, of course, numbers that are less important and which cannot be described within the limits of such a book as this. They have been dealt with in the fullest manner by Major Kenneth Mason in his book "Routes in the Western Himalaya, Kashmir, etc."

During the summer months the State organises a system by which each village, or group of villages on the main routes has to provide a certain number of coolies or ponies for transport. The system is known as Res and the coolies as Respas. The sanctioned rate of payment is usually half an anna a mile for a coolie and one anna for a pony; a pony can carry rather more than two coolies. Something extra has usually to be given if there is a pass to be crossed. Before 15th of April the rates are double this amount, so travelling is then expensive. Before 15th of May the State does not help travellers proceeding across the Zoji La and they have, therefore, to make their own arrangements. Coolies will then demand between five and seven rupees for the four marches from Gund to Dras.

At the end of each march, if the coolies have done their work well, they should be given an anna or so each as buksheesh. When off the beaten track, it is surprising how pleased they are at even a very moderate tip, and

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while it is important not to treat them meanly, it is also a mistake to spoil them and so cause later travellers to suffer.

§ 2.

Over the Zoji La.

From Srinagar to Kargil is 9 marches and 123 miles.

1—5. *Srinagar—Baltal—(See Chapter ii)*	...	60½ *miles.*
6. *Baltal—Matayan*	...	15 *miles.*
7. *Matayan—Dras* ...	...	12½ *miles.*
8. *Dras—Shimsa Kharbu*	...	20½ *miles.*
9. *Shimsa Kharbu—Kargil*	...	15 *miles.*

Between Srinagar and Kargil there are rest-houses at each stage, but transport for Dras must be obtained at Gund and for Kargil at Dras, as the inhabitants at the intervening stages are too few to provide the necessary number of coolies.

The route is for the most part easy, and even the Zoji La presents few difficulties during the summer, when it is open for pony transport, but early in the year snow lies between Sonamarg and Dras and the way is wearisome to a degree. The Zoji La must then be crossed with the greatest caution, as sudden storms and avalanches often make it extremely dangerous. There should be two days' fine weather to allow the snow to become firmly settled before the crossing is attempted, and even then the top of the pass must be reached soon after dawn, which will entail starting from Baltal at about three in the morning. The local men have a very good idea of when conditions are safe and will refuse to start if they are not. Frequently

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on sunny days a bitter wind rages down the pass and the crossing of it may give a stiff battle even on a day that may appear perfect from a distance.

At this time of year the road cut along the cliff face is impassable and the way lies up the snow beds at the foot of the nullah. In the dim light of a bitter dawn the granite cliffs that rise for hundreds of feet sheer from the nullah bed, with the wind whistling among their crannies, afford a sombre and forbidding prospect that accords well with the reputation of the place.

At Machoi, eight miles from Baltal and almost mid-way between it and Matayan, there is a small rest-house for travellers overtaken by stormy weather, or exhausted by their struggle through deep soft snow. Machoi is a God-forsaken, dreary spot, consisting of two or three houses for the telegraph staff, the rest-house and a thin line of telegraph poles leading away into the distance on either hand. The next halting place is Matayan, a tiny village with a two-roomed rest-house at the further end of a small plain, overhung by mighty cliffs of dark brown rock. The winters here are very severe and the village is buried deep in snow. During these months the inhabitants hibernate, only coming out occasionally to enjoy the scanty sunshine.

At Dras there is a post and telegraph office and a large ramshackle rest-house. The village itself is long and straggling, and is really a collection of hamlets scattered about the foot of a wide and undulating valley, pent in on every side by lofty hills. Here and there clumps of willows break the monotony and small fields of cultivation have been won from the stony soil. Bitter winds sweep the valley and early in the year the scene is intensely desolate. But when the snow has melted, and the willow trees are covered with fresh new green, and the air is alive

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with the songs of hundreds of skylarks, Dras can appear a very pleasant spot.

Some miles further on, the valley once more closes in and the road winds along endless barren hill-sides; past the old stage at Tashgam, which is nothing more than a dirty little village of flat-roofed houses; past Shimsa Kharbu with its rest-house and camping ground in a grove of shady willow trees; past the Shingo-Shigar and Dras river confluence and the substantial suspension bridge at Kharal, until it suddenly turns a spur of the mountain and in one moment enters Ladakh, of which Kargil forms the furthest outpost.

The contrast in scenery is very striking. At Kharal bridge the road forks. To the left it leads down into Baltistan with its rugged mountains and Mahommedan population, while to the right the road to Leh enters typical Tibetan country, and within a very short distance Mahommedanism is left behind and all the inhabitants are Buddhists.

§ 3

The Indus Valley Route to Skardu.

From Kargil to Skardu is 6 marches and 104 miles.

1. *Kargil—Olding-Thang*	.. ..	16 *miles.*
2. *Olding-Thang—Bagicha*	.. ..	19 *miles.*
3. *Bagicha—Tolti* ..	.. ..	16 *miles.*
4. *Tolti—Parkutta* ..	.. ..	18 *miles.*
5. *Parkutta—Gol* ..	.. ..	14 *miles.*
6. *Gol—Skardu* ..	.. ..	21 *miles.*

Travellers from Srinagar intending to use this route should either send a telegram from Dras, or, better still, send a man on ahead to arrange with the Tehsildar at

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Kargil for coolies to be ready at Kharal bridge. If this is done, the six-mile detour from Kharal bridge to Kargil and back will be avoided, but it will probably be necessary to camp by the bridge. No firewood or supplies can be obtained there, for the old rest-house is now a complete ruin and there is no village nearer than Kirkitchu, nearly three miles away. The servants will not like the idea as they will not be able to visit the bazaar at Kargil, so, unless time is of primary importance, the saving of the extra six miles is perhaps hardly worth the organisation necessary.

Ponies can usually be taken the whole way to Skardu, but landslides frequently occur after heavy rain and the pony track may then be blocked in places. Coolies and pony transport can be obtained at each stage without much difficulty, provided the amount required is not too great. There are rest-houses at the end of each march, but several of them, notably at Bagicha, are very small and dirty, have little furniture and leaky roofs.

During the first march the road runs down the valley of the Suru river, until it enters the Indus valley a few miles below Olding. This great river rises far within the boundaries of Tibet, in the neighbourhood of the Manasarowar lake. It enters Kashmir territory in upper Ladakh, where it appears as a broad and shallow stream, but, throughout almost the whole length of its course in Baltistan and Gilgit, it is bounded within the confines of a narrow precipitous valley, down which it rushes in a raging torrent. From its source it flows almost due west for many miles, but, a short distance above the confluence of the Gilgit river, it turns suddenly towards the south, and, bursting through the main Himalayan range close beneath the frowning precipices of Nanga Parbat and the Hattu Pir, it enters hostile

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tribal territory, where for many miles of its course no white man has ever trod.

The first sight of this famous river is singularly unimpressive. The path lies far up the mountain side and the Indus appears as a thin muddy streak in the valley far below.

From Olding onwards much of the scenery is very grand. For long distances the Indus flows deep within a series of stupendous canyons and is sometimes confined to a narrow channel not more than a few yards wide. Above, dark cliffs sweep upwards for thousands of feet, and for miles on end there is scarcely a blade of grass. The road finds its way, now close beside the river across stretches of coarse sand and shingle, now high above, and, in many places, it is carried across the face of sheer cliffs on rickety wooden props, between the gaps in which glimpses can be seen of the river rushing far below. The traveller, who is unused to Himalayan conditions, will need steady nerves and a good head for heights. On a rainy day, when clouds lie low upon the mountains, the scenery is indescribably gloomy and the occasional growl of falling rocks loosened by the rain adds a further sombre note.

In weather such as this, or when the winter snows are melting, great care should be exercised in those places where the road is overhung by cliffs, as falls of rock, which sweep across the road, are not uncommon.

Such a country is naturally but sparsely inhabited and the villages widely separated. All cultivation is entirely dependent upon irrigation and the Baltis are extremely clever and painstaking in making the most of the few streams available. Irrigation channels are taken off from the main stream high up the valley and are lead with infinite labour for miles across the hill-sides. They can be seen from a great distance, as each channel is

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bordered with a narrow ribbon of vegetation that appears like a green thread drawn across the bare brown hills.

The villages are very attractive. Situated almost always near the mouth of a nullah, whose stream forms their water supply, they afford a green and pleasant shade, that is very welcome after a tiring march across miles of barren rocks and shale, among which an occasional unexpected rose bush blossoming in wild profusion has perhaps been the sole sign of vegetation. The houses are all flat-roofed, built of rough stone with wooden rafters and a layer of beaten earth on top. The chief building, except where there is a local rajah's palace, is invariably the village mosque, for the inhabitants are all Mahommedans, as is shewn by the retiring habits of the women and the voice of the " Muezzin " calling the faithful to prayer in the early dawn and again at dusk.

Wheat and barley are the chief crops ; coarse turnips are also grown, and, between the houses and among the small terraced fields, poplar, willow, apricot and apple trees thrive. In the lower and warmer parts of the country below Skardu mulberries and vines also occur. Currants and excellent apricots, locally called korbanis, are dried in large numbers and form the most important article of export, and quantities of them are presented to travellers at every halting place. A little alluvial gold is mined in places and a number of articles, such as small bowls and tea-cups, are made of a soft dull-green stone, called, by courtesy, jade.

In the cultivated oases magpies are almost as common as crows, but are infinitely more attractive with their black and white plumage shining in the sunlight with a greenish sheen, and during the summer several pairs of handsome hoopoes make their nests in every village. Blue tits and sand-martins among the birds, and dandelion flowers and

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sweet smelling white clover strike a familiar English note in these strange surroundings.

The Baltis are of mixed blood, Mongolian primarily, but with a considerable admixture of Aryan stock. They inter-marry with the Dards of Astor and Gilgit and among them there are quite a number with brownish fair hair, blue eyes and a complexion not much darker than that of a European. They are a naturally cheerful race, though they have nothing very obvious to be cheerful about, and are usually pleasant and easy to deal with. The men wear coarsely-woven pyjamas and tunic, a curious low-crowned hat of the same material, and their hair long, falling almost to their shoulders. They are inveterate smokers, but do not use a pipe. Instead they prepare a small mound of earth, in the top of which they make a hole with their fingers. A lateral tunnel is then bored with a small stick, through which they draw the smoke turn and turn about, kneeling down and applying their lips to the hole.

Owing to the prevailing system of polygamy many of them are intensely poor, and, as the country can only support a limited population, numbers migrate every year to other parts of the Himalayas and even to the Punjab in search of employment.

The level of the road falls very gradually from 8,500 feet above the sea at Kharal bridge to 7,500 feet at Skardu, but this small difference in height makes an enormous difference to the climate, and the spring at Skardu sets in at least a month earlier than in even the lower parts of Ladakh.

During much of the last two stages to Skardu the road lies along wide barren valleys covered several inches deep in loose sand, so that marching is hot and tiring. Some miles above Gol the Shyok river joins the Indus, which is thereby nearly doubled in size.

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The Shyok valley is the richest and most fertile district of Baltistan. The chief village, Khapalu, is situated in an oasis several miles long and is the seat of the local rajah. An important trading route leads up the valley, across the 16,700-foot Chorbat La, and thence into Ladakh. This pass is not very difficult and is open to pony and yak transport for several months during the summer.

Much of the return journey down the Shyok valley can be quickly and easily accomplished on the skin rafts, called zaks, which do the work of ferry boats in this part of the world. They are amazingly primitive craft and cannot have been altered materially for centuries past. Made of a framework of light sticks, to the underside of which a number of goat skins are attached, they are blown up by applying the mouth to one of the leg holes, which is tied up with string when the skin has been sufficiently inflated.

Such rafts are buoyant enough, provided the skins do not leak too fast, but crossing a large river, such as the Indus or Shyok, is a tedious business, as they can only take about half a dozen coolies and their loads at one time. No such modern improvements as oars or paddles are used, merely thin sticks, so that, by the time the passage is effected, the raft has generally drifted the best part of a mile downstream and has to be carried an equivalent distance above the required point on the opposite side before starting on the return journey. Altogether such a crossing is a slow and leisurely affair, which, by the time the necessary bargaining has been finished, sometimes occupies the best part of a day.

The approach to Skardu lies along a wide sandy plain, with high cliffs close on the left hand, and in the middle distance a number of curious isolated hills. The town straggles over a considerable area close beneath a high

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isolated rock, on the top of which there is an old Sikh fort. Numerous poplar trees line the paths and afford an inadequate shade from the fierce summer sun. It is the winter residence of the Wazir-Wazarat, who, together with his court, migrates to Leh each summer. There is a polo ground, post office, dispensary and a large bazaar, in which excellent dried apricots can be purchased and occasionally a few English stores, but these are naturally expensive and are likely to be stale.

The Shigar river runs into the Indus opposite Skardu. The valley of this river is the route by which explorers and mountaineers approach the terrific peaks and glaciers that lie at its head. Askole is the last village and beyond there is nothing but a world of snow and ice ; the Baltoro and Siachen glaciers, longer than any in the world outside Arctic regions ; and the colossal peaks of the Mustagh range, Masherbrum, the Bride, K 2, and Gusherbrum, none of which have yet been climbed in spite of several determined attempts.

A few miles below Skardu the Indus once more enters a series of terrific gorges, down which it rushes until it reaches Gilgit. The road is rough and tiring and in many places is too bad even for unladen ponies. The mountains are bare and stony, dotted here and there with juniper bushes, and, in the summer, the heat reflected from the rocky hill-sides is terrific. Some of the villages are almost completely isolated and the only means of communication across the Indus is by an occasional precarious rope-bridge. Communication with the further shore is first made by swimming across a sheep with a thin line attached to it. The thin line is used to draw a thicker one across and eventually the whole bridge is hauled into position. These bridges consist of three thick ropes of twisted willow twigs anchored at either end to heavy boulders ; one acts as a

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foot-rope and the other two are for the hands. Such a bridge has an enormous sag and sways alarmingly in a breeze, so that crossing one for the first time is exceedingly trying to the nerves.

Were it not the home of markhor, the country beyond Skardu would be seldom visited by Europeans.

§ 4.

The Gilgit Road.

From Srinagar to Gilgit is 15 marches and 228 miles.

1.	*Srinagar—Sumbal* ..	..	15½ *miles.*
2.	*Sumbal—Bandipur* ..	..	19½ *miles.*
3.	*Bandipur—Tragbal* ..	..	12 *miles.*
4.	*Tragbal—Koragbal* ..	..	15 *miles.*
5.	*Koragbal—Gurais* ..	..	13 *miles.*
6.	*Gurais—Peshwari* ..	..	14 *miles.*
7	*Peshwari—Burzil Chowki* ..	..	11 *miles.*
8.	*Burzil Chowki—Chillam* ..	..	17 *miles.*
9.	*Chillam—Godkai* ..	..	16 *miles.*
10.	*Godkai—Astor* ..	..	17 *miles.*
11.	*Astor—Dashkin* ..	..	14 *miles.*
12.	*Dashkin—Doyan* ..	..	11 *miles.*
13.	*Doyan—Bunji*	..	18 *miles.*
14.	*Bunji—Safed-Parri* ..	..	17 *miles.*
15.	*Safed-Parri—Gilgit* ..	..	18 *miles.*

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The Gilgit Road, which, until towards the end of the last century, was no more than a rough mountain track, used to be greatly feared by the Kashmiris, who were used in large numbers by the State to supply forced labour for the transport of grain and stores to the distant garrison. No arrangements existed for feeding or housing these coolies, and so many of them died on the way from exposure and disease, that the mere mention of Gilgit was sufficient to drive whole villages to the hills, there to hide for days on end, until they were convinced that the danger of being pressed into service had passed.

The serious threat of the Russian advance towards the North-West frontier of India, and the failure of the Kashmir State to maintain order among the virile tribesmen of the frontier valleys, eventually induced the Government of India to take over the defence of Gilgit, and, in order to improve the long and difficult lines of communication, to construct a military road from Bandipur. This road was completed in the summer of 1892 after enormous labour and many casualties among the Pathan coolies.

Upon the completion of this road the large, ill-disciplined, ill-equipped garrison that was maintained at enormous expense by the Kashmir State, was supplanted by a small, but extremely efficient force under British officers. Since then the tribesmen have been reduced to subjection, the Pax Britannica has been extended to the furthest corners of the Gilgit Agency and the influence of Britain far beyond.

All this was not accomplished without a considerable amount of fighting, which, in 1892, culminated in a small war against the Hunza-Nagars, a warlike tribe of raiders, who lived chiefly by harassing the caravans from Kashgar

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and Yarkand. The well-known war-correspondent, E. F. Knight, was present at Gilgit while this expedition was being carried on, and in his book, "Where three Empires Meet," he vividly describes the enormous difficulties with which the minute British force had to contend, and the severe fighting that took place among some of the most stupendous mountains of the world, in the course of which three V. C.'s were won by British officers.

This expedition was followed shortly afterwards by the conquest of Chilas ; another brilliant and completely successful miniature campaign.

The Gilgit road is only open beyond Gurais to travellers provided with a special permit. Ladies are not allowed to cross the Kamri or Burzil passes, even when accompanied by their husbands, and visitors to Gilgit are generally not encouraged. The road is only fit for pack animals during the summer and autumn, as in winter the snowfall on the Rajdiangan and Burzil passes is heavy and the danger from avalanches sometimes great.

As far as the Burzil or Kamri passes the country for the most part is fertile and well-wooded, and some of the views, particularly from the top of the Rajdiangan and Kamri passes, are very fine. At Gurais the valley of the Kishenganga forms a delightful upland resort during the summer, when the climate is cool and pleasant. Good fishing can be obtained, and a short expedition to the eastwards into Tilel takes one into a district where red bear are still fairly numerous. However, once the Burzil pass has been crossed and the road enters Astor, the country becomes bare and arid, bounded on every side by precipitous mountains, and has little to commend it other than magnificent markhor and ibex.

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Supplies in Astor and Gilgit are scanty, and travellers are advised to take sufficient of everything that they are likely to require with them from Srinagar. The marches from Astor to Gilgit, for the most part over stony wastes which radiate the sun's heat fiercely, are exceedingly hot and tiring during the summer months.

Gilgit, where the British Political Agent resides, is the chief, indeed the only town of any importance in the province. It is situated on a river of the same name some miles above its junction with the Indus and at almost the same level as Srinagar. The climate is never very cold in winter. Snow does not fall to any great depth, nor does it lie long in the valleys, and in the summer, owing to radiation from the surrounding hills, it is often extremely hot.

During the winter and spring, when the Kashmir road is blocked by snow, the country is entirely isolated, hemmed in for miles on every side by some of the highest mountains in the world.

Much of the Gilgit valley is highly cultivated ; fruit trees are numerous and fair crops of rice, wheat and barley are grown, but beyond the limits of the irrigated land the valleys are completely barren. On some of the hill-sides, at a height of about 7,000 feet above the sea, there are extensive woods of juniper and fir, and higher still, thickets of silver birch.

The inhabitants are Dards of Aryan stock. They are strong physically and comparatively prosperous. The wealthier among them are good horsemen and are devoted to polo, a game that is also played throughout Baltistan and in many parts of Ladakh.

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§ 5.

The Deosai Route to Skardu.

From Srinagar to Skardu is 11 marches and 155 miles.

1—7. *Srinagar—Burzil Chowki*	..	100 *miles.*
8. *Burzil Chowki—Sikhbach* ..	..	15 *miles.*
9. *Sikhbach—Lalpani* ..	..	10 *miles.*
10. *Lalpani—Usar Mar* ..	..	12 *miles.*
11. *Usar Mar—Skardu* ..	..	18 *miles.*

This is the main summer route to Skardu and is far shorter than by the Indus valley. It is only open, however, from about July the first for three months every year. Pony transport can be used the whole way. The first two marches, as far as Bandipur, should be accomplished by boat, and for the next five the route lies along the Gilgit road. At Burzil Chowki the road to Skardu diverges and for three marches leads across the plains of Deosai, an extensive desolate plateau swept by bitter winds, but from which wonderful views may be obtained of Nanga Parbat and the distant Karakoram range.

No supplies or firewood are obtainable and travellers must therefore make adequate arrangements beforehand. On the Deosai plains marmots are common and an occasional red bear may be met with. Late in the summer mosquitoes swarm.

These wind-swept plains, which contrast strongly with the confined valleys of Astor and Baltistan, are distinctly Tibetan in character, and it is with an active sense of relief that the traveller, returning from a long stay among the gorges of the Indus valley, again views the wide arch of the heavens and the sweep of a distant horizon.

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§ 6.

Ladakh.

From Kargil to Leh is 7 marches and 111 miles.

1. *Kargil—Mulbekh* ...	...	... 22	*miles.*
2. *Mulbekh—Bod Kharbu*	...	... 14½	*miles.*
3. *Bod Kharbu—Lamayuru*	...	... 14½	*miles.*
4. *Lamayuru—Nurla*	...	... 17	*miles.*
5. *Nurla—Saspul* ...	...	... 14	*miles.*
6. *Saspul—Nimu* ...	...	... 11	*miles.*
7. *Nimu—Leh* ...	...	... 18	*miles.*

This route is the main, and in fact the only really practicable route at the western end of the Himalayas, along which caravans from the populous districts of Central Asia can gain access to Kashmir and thence to the plains of India. It is, therefore, of considerable importance and has often been described, not only by travellers and merchants, but also by sportsmen, who have visited Ladakh in pursuit of the magnificent wild sheep, which are to be found in the remoter districts.

Ladakh is an extremely interesting country, quite unlike the rest of Kashmir, or indeed, if we except Sikkim at the eastern end of the Himalayas, any other part of India. The numerous monuments of the Buddhist religion, the curious customs of the people, the extraordinary shapes into which the rocks and mountains have weathered, the rich colouring that they display, particularly in the low light of a setting sun, the intense blue of the shadows and air, which is so clear that distant objects appear quite close at hand, all combine in the make-up of a charming and fantastic country.

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Physically, Ladakh is a portion of Tibet, and in appearance, religion and many of their customs the inhabitants take after their Tibetan neighbours. To the north it is bounded by the Karakoram range, which must be crossed by high and difficult passes before the comparatively fertile and low-lying countries of Central Asia can be approached. To the south lies Rupshu with its enormous brackish lakes, and the barren Zanskar district, which is so high and so cold that, when the inhabitants even visit Leh, situated at 11,500 feet above the sea, they complain of its low and enervating situation. To the west lies Kashmir, approached across the Zoji La.

The whole country is one of the most elevated in the world. There are mountains over 25,000 feet high extensive lakes exist at a height of nearly 15,000 feet cultivation is carried on almost to this level, and the Indus valley, where the majority of the largest villages are situated, is nowhere much below twelve thousand feet above the sea. The climate is dry, cold and healthy, but rigorous in the extreme, although the rainfall is so slight that, even in winter, snow never lies to any great depth. Great heat and intense cold may be experienced within a very short space of time. Sheltered rocks exposed to the direct rays of the sun may be almost too hot to touch, while a bitter wind is bringing tears to the eyes. Simultaneous frost-bite on one side of the body and sun-burn on the other would almost be possible.

Owing to the scanty rainfall, all cultivation has to be carried on by means of irrigation. Wheat and a kind of coarse barley, known as grim, form the chief crops ; peas, beans and turnips are grown, and in the warmer parts there are orchards of apricot and apple trees. In the higher portions of the country, where cultivation is impossible, the inhabitants are mostly nomads engaged

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in rearing sheep and goats. These nomads are called Champas and do not, as a rule, mix much, or inter-marry with the agricultural and settled villagers.

The road from Kargil is kept in fair repair and pack ponies can be used the whole way to Leh. In the summer, on the long shadeless stretches, the heat and glare are sometimes very trying. At each halting place there is a furnished rest-house for the use of European travellers and it is therefore not essential to take tents, provided there is no intention of proceeding further than Leh, and if the usual stages are adhered to. A small collection of English novels is kept in each of these rest-houses and there is a book which every traveller is expected to sign. Some of the entries go back many years and among them are to be found numbers of distinguished names.

No one is permitted to travel beyond Kargil without a special pass from the British Joint Commissioner. These passes are limited in number, and applications for them should, therefore, be made well in advance.

Kargil is situated in a wide undulating valley surrounded by low hills, which give place at some distance to high snow-covered mountains. There is a considerable amount of cultivation and the place is considered by the Ladakhis to be exceedingly warm and fertile, but, to an eye not attuned to the barrenness of Tibetan scenery, the rows of poplar trees and small fields of indifferent barley appear but thin and scanty. Beyond Kargil Mahommedanism is left behind and the inhabitants are all Buddhists, whose customs and appearance are new and strange and interesting.

It is a long march to Mulbekh; at first over rolling plateaux among typical Tibetan scenery, and later down the valley of the Wakka Chu, beneath fantastic crags and precipices of richly coloured sandstone.

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At Shergol, about two miles short of Mulbekh, there is the first of the monasteries, or gompas ; several chortens and prayer walls are passed, and just outside Mulbekh there is an enormous figure of Buddha carved in the rock.

From now onwards evidences of the Buddhist religion appear at every side. Each village has its monastery, ragged prayer flags flutter from the roofs of many of the houses, chortens and manis dot the country-side and numerous prayer wheels, some worked automatically by water, others carried in the hand, are unmistakable signs of the strong religious tendencies of the people.

The Ladakhis are distinctly Mongolian in appearance. Ugly and dirty, they have a pronounced sense of humour and are generally honest and easy to get on with, except when they are under the influence of chang, a kind of barley beer and the national drink. There is, of course, no purdah system and this, with the cheerful friendliness of the people, makes Ladakh a far more pleasant country in which to travel than any inhabited by Mahommedans or Hindus.

The men wear thick shapeless garments, usually of dark red cloth reaching well below their knees, with a girdle at the waist from which hangs a collection of tinder-boxes, whips, cups, etc. On their heads they wear pig-tails and cloth caps with prominent ear-flaps, and their feet are covered by loose-fitting top boots of embroidered felt. The women hide the few charms they possess beneath masses of indeterminate garments and affect a curious head-dress made of leather and red cloth, which hangs some way down their back and is studded with turquoises. This, together with numerous bangles, anklets and necklaces, is the Ladakhi method of investing their wealth in gilt-edged securities.

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Like Baltistan the country can only support a limited population, but unlike the Baltis, who live at a comparatively low elevation, the Ladakhis are unable to seek employment elsewhere, as once they leave the rarified air of their own country for any length of time, they sicken and die. The curious custom of polyandry is therefore practised, with excellent results in keeping the population within bounds, and, so far as can be ascertained, with no attendant ill-effects.

This system gives the women a very considerable amount of freedom. Legally they have all the rights of the men, and, as marriage ties are by no means eternally binding, husbands with enlarged ideas of their own importance can be dealt with very effectively.

The eldest son inherits his parents' estate when he marries, and thereafter has merely to make adequate provision for his sisters and their support. If he has brothers, he must also support the next two, who, as a return, are permitted to share his wife, but not to marry themselves. Any children of the marriage regard all three husbands as their father. If there are more brothers than three, the younger ones must either become lamas and enter a monastery, or become coolies, unless they are fortunate enough to attract the attentions of the daughter of a family in which there are no sons. Such a daughter, being an heiress, is in a very strong position, as she can either contract an orthodox marriage with an elder son and his two immediately younger brothers, or else she can arrange a kind of experimental marriage with a younger son. Such a temporary union is considered perfectly respectable and there is a religious ceremony by which it is celebrated. The husband of such a marriage, called a magpa, has to conduct himself carefully, as he can be dismissed by his

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wife without any legal or religious difficulty. On the other hand he cannot leave his heiress without proving the grossest misconduct on her part ; a matter of no small difficulty in a country where morals are lax and husbands take an indulgent view of the indiscretions of their wives.

If a husband dies, the wife is under no obligation to remain with the two junior husbands. If she does not wish to do so, she ties a thread to the finger of her dead husband, breaks it and thereafter is considered free of all three of them.

Religion has a most important place in the lives of these people, though actually those, who are not monks, do not take a very active part in the matter, maintaining that it is the business of the monks, and not themselves, to do so. The monks themselves are generally lax in observing the precepts of their religion and depraved in many of their habits, so that one cannot help comparing their practices with the worst abuses prevalent among monasteries in Europe during the middle ages. In Ladakh Buddhism has sunk into a system of degraded idolatry, guided by meaningless conventions and fantastic superstitions.

The monasteries are havens for surplus sons and to Ladakh what the colonies and an extending empire were to the younger sons of unwieldy Victorian families. They form a prominent feature of every village of any importance, as for some reason they seem invariably to be perched on the top of a high and inaccessible rock, or in some other prominent, if inconvenient site. One of them should certainly be visited, for they are extremely interesting and the lamas usually have no objection to showing people round. The savage mastiffs that guard the gates must be given a wide berth, unless there is a monk at hand to quell them.

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At the entrance there are generally a number of prayer wheels. These are curious little cylinders containing a small piece of paper, on which a prayer is written. They are frequently carried in the hand and are rotated as the owner walks about, but some of them are worked automatically by wind and others by water power. The underlying idea is that every time a wheel is made to revolve it is the equivalent of saying a prayer. Inside the monastery, the chapel is usually the most interesting building and contains a number of curious objects, such as elaborately carved images of Buddha, hangings of Chinese silk embroidered with fantastic designs, and other interesting items.

The monks are very fond of music and each lamasery has its band. The orchestra chiefly consists of gongs, cymbals and enormous trumpet-shaped instruments. The music which they produce is very curious, but not attractive to European ears, though it is said that, in reality, some of it has great merit and is based on the most ancient and scientific principles of musical composition.

Most of the lamas belong to the red sect; the yellow sect, who have the reputation of being stricter and more ascetic, being mostly confined to Tibet proper. They wear a cloak and shawl of a dirty wine colour, clean-shaven heads, and a red cap with the usual ear-flaps. The monasteries are well endowed and own a considerable amount of land and other property. The monks are divided into two classes, who attend respectively to the temporal and spiritual side of the business. The temporal monks look after the rents, cultivate the land, beg for alms, lend money and so on, while the spiritual brethren, as Knight says, " . . . devote their time to dreaming and religious exercises and . . . . their sole duties are to mumble

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CHORTENS AND PRAYER WALLS ON THE ROAD TO LEH.

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and intone words they do not understand and to dance the complicated figures of the sacred dances."

In a few of the most important monasteries, in which a head lama has attained to a very unusual degree of holiness, his successors are known as skooshoks. When a skooshok is about to die, he informs the monks in his monastery of the place where he will be re-incarnated. After his death a search is made for a new-born child in the appointed place and the most likely one is chosen to be the re-born skooshok. After four years, if the child gives certain proofs that he is indeed the skooshok, he is installed in the monastery where he spends the rest of his life in meditation and prayer. The people firmly believe in this re-incarnation and assert that no trickery is resorted to in order to make sure that the four-year old child may be able to produce the necessary proofs.

There are, besides, a number of nunneries, which are frequently situated close to, and form, as it were, a branch of the monasteries. Nuns and monks between them form nearly one-sixth of the population.

Other objects connected with the Buddhist religion that cannot fail to attract attention are the numerous chortens and prayer walls, or manis. Chortens are white-washed pagoda-like erections, which vary from a yard or so to nearly fifty feet in height. Inside they contain the ashes of dead lamas mixed with clay and baked into medallions stamped with the image of Buddha.

The prayer walls are even more curious. They are massive affairs, perhaps seven feet high and the same in width, with an inverted V-shaped top of sloping stones and may extend to several hundred yards in length. Each stone placed on such a wall is supposed to be a good deed done. The stones are generally elaborately carved

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by itinerant monks, who spend their lives acquiring merit in this way, and in addition they are inscribed with the well-known Tibetan prayer "Om mani padme hom," a phrase that is repeated countless times a day by every good Ladakhi lama. Its meaning is not clear, even to the average monk, and the usual translation, "Oh God, the flower in the lotus," does not help us very much.

Merit is acquired by all who pass these walls on the left hand side: a strong inducement to one-way traffic.

At Mulbekh there is the usual rest-house and monastery perched on a fantastic crag. The brilliant colouring and varying shades of the surrounding mountains are very curious and quite in keeping with the general character of the country.

The next day's march to Bod Kharbu is not nearly so long, but the 12,200-foot Namika La has to be crossed. This is an easy pass, the summit of which is usually bare of snow but is thickly encrusted with a deposit of salt. The descent on the further side presents no difficulties and the remainder of the march lies along a fertile valley dotted with villages, among which Bod Kharbu, where the rest-house is situated, is the most important. Dominating this village there is a jagged hill with precipitous sides, honey-combed with dwellings, and crowned with the remains of an ancient fort that once must have been very nearly impregnable.

Next day another easy pass, the Fotu La, 13,000 feet above the sea and the highest point on the road to Leh, is crossed. The road over it is easy enough, and beyond, the way leads down the bed of a dried-up water-course pent in by cliffs even more remarkable than usual in shape and colouring. The last part of the march is along

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a bare and stony valley, bordered with prayer walls and countless chortens, with Lamayuru perched on the hill-side at the further end. This village and the monastery situated a short distance above it are one of the most interesting places on the road to Leh.

After leaving Lamayuru the way lies along the bed of a narrow ravine, so hemmed in with cliffs that the road is more than once forced from one side of the stream to the other. After seven miles the Indus valley opens out and two miles further on there is a suspension bridge across the river guarded by an ancient Dogra fort. Khalatse, a large village situated in the midst of a considerable area of cultivation and shaded by groves of fruit trees, lies on the further side. Here there is a post office and rest-house, so, if time is of great importance, the three marches from Bod Kharbu to Saspul can be reduced to two by halting here for the night, instead of at Lamayuru. The remainder of the distance to Nurla is completely shadeless and during the middle of the day the heat and glare are generally very trying.

Between Nurla and Saspul the country is entirely arid, only one small irrigated patch breaking the monotony, but at Saspul itself there is a considerable oasis. Alchi monastery, situated about two miles away on the further side of the river, over which there is a bridge, is interesting.

The following day's journey is less monotonous. The road leaves the Indus, which for some distance is pent in between high cliffs, and crosses an elevated plateau. Bazgo, a picturesque village, built on the side of a precipitous and highly coloured rocky hill and dominated by a large lamasery and ruined fortress, is situated eight miles further on. The remainder of the march is over arid sandy wastes.

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The last stage is for the most part over a stony desert relieved here and there by a green jewel of cultivation. Pitok, with the usual ruined fort and monastery, is reached after thirteen miles and here there is an excellent, though little used rest-house, where the journey can be broken with advantage. This village marks the entrance to the Leh valley and a short way beyond the Indus is left behind, and in the remaining four miles the road climbs steadily for more than a thousand feet to the level of the city.

The first view of Leh is not particularly impressive, but, as one draws nearer, the massive palace of the ancient kings of Ladakh, and higher still, the extensive buildings of the monastery appear distinctly imposing. Within the town there is a post and telegraph office, a dispensary and a rest-house situated in a shady garden. During the summer the British Joint Commissioner resides in Leh. His duties are to supervise the trade with Central Asia and to settle disputes in which British subjects are involved. There has also been a Moravian Mission in Leh for many years. The missionaries have done most excellent work in their school and hospital and have gathered round them a small community of converts to the Christian faith.

Although Leh is the religious capital of Western Tibet and an important centre for caravans proceeding to, or coming from Central Asia, it has only a comparatively small fixed population of very mixed nationality. Buddhists of course predominate ; Kashmiri shop-keepers rub shoulders with Mahommedans from other parts of the Himalayas, and there is a fair sprinkling of other races. There are also numbers of Mahommedan half-castes, known as Arguns, the offspring of traders visiting Ladakh and the women of the country.

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A Street in Leh.

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September is the busiest month and then the population of Leh grows to nearly double its winter size, for in September the passes over the mountains to the north are in good condition and numerous caravans arrive from Central Asia to exchange goods with merchants who trade with India.

An imposing gateway gives access to the main street, or bazaar of the town, which is wide and shaded by poplars, and also does duty as a polo ground. When polo is to be played the street is cleared and the shops close down. The game, as played in Ladakh, differs very greatly from the European variety, and although it is not so scientific, is well worth watching. The ordinary polo ground is bounded by walls about three feet high and the game is started by all the players dashing at a gallop from one end of the ground. The captain then throws the ball in the air and endeavours to hit it before it reaches the earth, after which the game becomes general. A goal is not counted unless one of the attacking side can dismount and pick up the ball before the defenders can hit it away. The game has few rules and is played with enormous vigour and dash to the strains of a band, which celebrates the scoring of a goal with wild triumphant music.

There are several buildings that should be visited. The palace of the Gialpos, or ancient rajahs of Ladakh ; the fort outside the town, where the small garrison of Kashmir State troops is quartered, and the monastery with its enormous effigy of Buddha. There are, besides, numerous chortens, some of which are interesting, and the longest prayer wall in Ladakh, extending for almost half a mile.

Few tourists penetrate further than Leh, except to visit Himis monastery, for the country beyond is exceedingly cold and arid. To the south and east lie barren highlands, almost uninhabited except for nomad

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herdsmen, the home of Ovis Ammon and rarely visited except by sportsmen. Vegetation is extremely scarce and boortza the only fuel obtainable. This plant is slaty-green in colour and so impregnated with an aromatic oil that a lighted match applied to a green and growing plant will set it ablaze. Northwards the difficult Khardong pass, 17,600 feet high, and the first obstacle on the long and difficult trading route to Central Asia, gives access to the comparatively fertile valleys of the Shyok and Nubra rivers.

At the head of the Nubra valley, Panamik is the last outpost of civilization for many weary miles, and it is not until the Saser pass, the Depsang plains and the Karakoram mountains have all been crossed and many marches beyond have been accomplished, that inhabited country is again encountered. This route is used by the traders of Turkestan ; by merchants from the bazaars of Yarkand and Kashgar, six hundred miles from Leh ; and by pilgrims to Mecca, who, often at an advanced age, set out from their homes on a journey that may perhaps take as much as two years to accomplish ; so real are the teachings of their faith.

Miracle plays are a great feature of religious life in Ladakh, and each year, in early June, Himis monastery is the scene of the most interesting of them. Any visitor to Leh at this time of year should certainly undertake the two extra marches in order to witness it, particularly if, as happens once in about twenty years, an extra special play is to be produced.

Himis is a large and exceedingly old monastery which accommodates several hundred monks. Owing to its secluded situation, tucked away at the head of a valley, it escaped pillage at the hands of the Dogra invaders and it is supposed, therefore, to be exceedingly wealthy.

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The miracle play, which lasts for two days, ends up with a general festival and attracts numbers of Buddhists from many parts of Ladakh and Tibet. It consists of a series of scenes played by the Lamas disguised in fantastic robes and masks. Some of the scenes are extremely impressive and the whole affair has points of similarity with the pageants of the Church of Rome. The play has been described at length by various writers, perhaps most vividly by E. F. Knight in his book "Where three Empires Meet."

§ 7

Kishtwar.

From Srinagar to Kishtwar is 6 marches and 98 miles.

1. *Srinagar—Avantipur*	...	...	18 *miles.*
2. *Avantipur—Islamabad*	...	...	17 *miles.*
3. *Islamabad—Dyus* ...	...	...	21 *miles.*
4. *Dyus—Sinthan* ...	...	...	14 *miles.*
5. *Sinthan—Chatru* ...	...	...	12 *miles.*
Chatru—Kishtwar	...	...	16 *miles.*

The south-eastern end of Kashmir is not much visited, except by sportsmen in the pursuit of tahr and other game, which abound on the steep hill-sides of Kishtwar. But, though the country cannot compare in interest with either Ladakh or Baltistan, it is well worth a short visit.

The main route into Kishtwar is by the Sinthan pass, with a less easy alternative way across the Marbal pass. There is another longer route from Jammu which cannot be recommended. From Srinagar the journey as far as Achabal is best done by car. It is possible to go as far as Islamabad by boat, but the journey by river, though considerably cheaper, of course takes far longer and is not particularly interesting. From Achabal as far as the

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ıoot of the Sinthan pass there is a good track running for the most part through delightful forest scenery. The Sinthan pass, 12,400 feet high, though easy enough in summer, is under snow from November till May, when it is only fit for coolie transport and can only be crossed in settled weather, and then often with great difficulty. From the pass there is a glorious panorama with the 21,000-foot Brahma peaks dominating the view.

Almost the whole of Kishtwar is sparsely inhabited and consists of deep gorges with mountains rising precipitously on either side, sometimes to a height of over 20,000 feet, with the villages perched precariously on the steep hill-sides. In winter the snow-fall is great and in the mid-summer months heavy monsoon rains make travel almost impossible. It is advisable, therefore, to visit Kishtwar either in spring, as soon as the melting snow allows the Sinthan pass to be crossed easily, or else in early autumn, when the rainy months are past.

The town of Kishtwar, which contains a post office and a dispensary, is a dilapidated, unattractive collection of buildings standing on a large alluvial fan at some height above the junction of the Wardwan and the Chenab. There are several small hamlets scattered about the low hills surrounding the town, and the open highly cultivated plain is in pleasant contrast to the narrow valleys and tangle of rocky mountains that lie beyond.

A rough track, passable for laden pack ponies in places, but here and there fit only for coolies, leads up the Chenab valley past Atholi, where there is another post office and dispensary, and then through Padar, the eastern-most division of Kishtwar, where there are some important sapphire mines belonging to the Kashmir State. Thence it branches into Chamba and across the difficult Umasi La into Zaskar and Ladakh.

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§ 8.

Camping Equipment.

It is generally a mistake to bring camping equipment from Europe. The cost of transport, particularly from Rawalpindi onwards, is heavy, and so many people camp every year in Kashmir, that all ordinary requirements are well understood and the necessary equipment can be easily hired. A close watch, however, must be kept on the supplier and all articles should be carefully examined for defects before accepting them. If a mountaineering, or exceptionally rigorous big game expedition is contemplated, special gear will probably have to be obtained from Europe. The remarks in this section refer only to travel on the ordinary routes.

One of the chief difficulties, when planning a long expedition for the first time, is to know how much to take and what to leave behind. Only the very young or inexperienced believe in acute discomfort for its own sake, and only the very wealthy can afford to travel with an enormous retinue of coolies and elaborate camp equipment. The suggestions given below indicate a minimum of gear with which an adequate degree of comfort can be obtained.

Tents. These can be hired in Srinagar for a few rupees a month, the price varying according to the size. Before accepting a tent, if there is time, see it pitched, or at any rate examine it carefully to see that there are no holes and that all the guy ropes, etc., are in good condition. In a separate bag there should be an adequate number of pegs and a mallet. If the pegs are of iron, which, though heavier, is very much better than wood, they should have

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a hole in the top and be kept tied together and locked up when not in use, as otherwise, in out of the way places where iron is scarce, they are likely to be stolen.

An ordinary 80-lb. tent does very well and is large enough for two people if necessary. Swiss cottage tents are more roomy, but are also a good deal heavier. In no circumstances should any single part of a tent weigh more than one pony load, and if there is the slightest chance of getting off the beaten track, or to places pony transport is not available, more than one coolie load. Each living tent should, of course, have an outer fly. A sewn-in floor is draught-proof and warm, but adds to the weight.

The servants are usually accommodated in a shuldari, which is a small single-fly tent weighing about twenty-five pounds. Each shuldari will shelter three to four servants.

Servants. (*See* also page 34.) Do not take a personal servant from the plains, unless he is willing to go and can face hard marching and severe cold, a thing that very few plainsmen can do. If he is not a Mahommedan, there will be trouble over the question of food and tents, as he will refuse either to sleep or eat with Kashmiris, who among the servant and shikari class are all Mahommedans. If a personal servant is taken, he will be useful not only for his work, but because he will keep an eye on the temporary servants and prevent them cheating you quite so freely as they otherwise would do. If a personal servant is not taken, one of the camp servants can easily do all that is required.

Three servants are ample. Get a good cook, who has been on other similar trips before. Such a cook, although expensive, is always a good investment, as it is not possible to enjoy hard exercise on badly-cooked food. He will have to be paid about thirty-five rupees a month,

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plus a small ration allowance and the money for a blanket, or coat and a pair of chaplies. A camp coolie to wait at table and help to pitch tents, etc., is necessary, and so is a tiffin coolie to accompany you on the march, carrying the lunch basket, camera and so on. Both these men must be paid twenty to twenty-five rupees a month, plus the usual allowances.

Each servant will expect a blanket, or coat and a pair of chaplies before starting. If they are going to be with you for some time, these things should be given them, but for a short trip, lasting only a week or two, they are not necessary. On the whole the best method is to get good servants, pay them well and keep them cheerful, because sulky servants are enough to mar a whole trip. The difficulty is to hit on a mean between spoiling them and satisfying them. Most people tend to spoil even bad servants and this is the root cause of half of the trouble they give.

The question of a sweeper is a difficult one. They usually need separate accommodation, which is a nuisance, and they are added expense. A secluded corner on the hill-side is generally more satisfactory. It should be borne in mind that the rest-houses on the Leh-Srinagar road have no sweeper in attendance.

It is advisable, though not always possible, to try out all the servants for a few days before starting to make sure that they are suitable.

Camp Furniture. A strong and light table is essential and so is a comfortable chair ; Roorkee chairs are hard to beat. A bed is a matter of personal choice, but a light mattress is a necessity. Many people believe a mattress on the ground to be far warmer and, after a couple of nights, no less comfortable than a camp bed. If a bed is taken, a strong light folding one should be

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chosen. See that the canvas is strong and new, as if it splits, repairs will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible.

Although they only give a dim light, candle lanterns are as good as any in the long run. Vapourised oil lamps give an excellent light as long as they work, but they quickly get out of order and the mantles break absurdly easily, so they cannot be recommended for use in the Himalayas.

Two spiders for the tent poles, a mat for its floor and a small electric torch will all be useful.

A folding bath is a necessity. Get the simplest kind you can. One of plain canvas will probably prove more satisfactory than an elaborate rubber affair. It is not a wise economy to leave a bath behind on a long trip as sponging down over a basin in an icy draught is an abomination. An old kerosene tin to heat the hot water in will not be forgotten by the servants. Keep all washing and toilet oddments in an enamel basin. Fit it into another half a size larger and cover them both with the usual leather cover. You can then use the larger basin without having first to take a hundred and one things out of it.

Medicines. At Leh and Skardu and one or two other places on the main routes there are State dispensaries where ordinary drugs can be obtained, but a small medicine chest should be included in the gear. It is really rather stupid to go a long way from the nearest help without knowing enough about elementary first aid and nursing to be able to cope fairly adequately with the ordinary illnesses and minor accidents that may be encountered. So if a long trip is going to be made, or annual leaves are to be spent in out of the way places, a short course in first aid should be studied.

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As a minimum, bandages, lint, cotton wool, a thermometer, epsom salts, aspirin, potash permanganate, iodine, quinine, zinc ointment, vaselene and castor oil are necessary. "Moore's Family Medicine and Hygiene for India" is an excellent book, but it describes so many illnesses that after reading it a sprained ankle may almost be diagnosed as advanced cancer.

At every village requests will be made for medicine. Some of the cases are obviously beyond help, but for minor complaints quinine, or a good warming draught of ginger essence, or even water coloured with a little permanganate of potash can do no harm, and, aided by faith, may even do good. If a very sick person is brought before you, tact is necessary, as, if you dose him and he dies shortly afterwards, your failure may not be received with the tolerance that more civilised communities shew to doctors.

Clothes. Any old tweed clothes will do. Great heat and severe cold may be encountered in quick succession, so both thin and warm clothes will be necessary. It is a mistake to take too many things. A spare suit and three or four changes of under-clothes are ample. A number of pairs of socks are necessary, as they wear out quickly on the march and need to be frequently changed. A good rain-proof coat is essential during the monsoon. In camp it is often cold at night and a pair of Gilgit boots and a thick overcoat will be comforts that are certain to be appreciated.

Boots require some thought. First-class English shooting boots are difficult to beat, but they cannot be repaired in the Himalayas and it is therefore essential to take a spare pair. Chaplies are cooler than boots and do very well. They can be bought for about five rupees a pair in Srinagar. For crossing snow passes the Kashmiri

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grass sandal and felt sock is as good as anything and gives a wonderful grip on slippery surfaces.

Transport. Coolies or ponies are the most usual, but in Ladakh yaks, or half breeds, called jhos, are often used. In the remote and barren plains of Tibet sheep have been found most successful, but they are not, of course, used on any of the more accessible routes. Coolie loads should not exceed sixty pounds and pony loads a hundred and twenty pounds. All the gear should be made up into packages not exceeding one coolie load in weight, so that, if ponies have to be changed for coolies, it will not be necessary to re-pack everything. An extra anna or two should be promised to any coolies who may have to carry extra heavy or awkward loads.

On the march keep fairly near to your transport as it is unpleasant arriving at a cold and exposed camping ground hours ahead of your gear, and if the coolies get into any difficulty, your help and encouragement may save hours of delay. Remember that local coolies will know the dangers and difficulties of the route ahead and if, owing to unsuitable weather, they are unwilling to start, do not force them to do so against their judgment, or bribe them by offering extra pay. If any accident happens to a coolie while in your employ, send in a full report to the Director, Visitors' Bureau in Srinagar, and also inform the neighbouring Tehsildar.

Stores. Your agent will give you an enormous list of items to choose from and nothing adds to the expense of a trip more quickly than an elaborate collection of tinned food. After a long day of hard exercise in the open air the simplest food, provided it is well-cooked, is palatable. Tinned food all tastes much the same, has little nourishment and becomes definitely unpleasant, however varied, after a few days. It is also heavy and expensive to cart about.

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Stores in Srinagar are expensive, so it may pay to bring them with you, in spite of the freight and the customs duty that will have to be paid. Your cook will bring with him rice and enough vegetables and eggs for the first two or three days.

Strong, light, leather boxes, called yakdans, can be bought for a few rupees each in Srinagar and are the best receptacles for stores, etc.

Below is a list of necessary stores for one person for one month. For a long trip a few luxuries should be added as a relief from the monotony of ordinary food.

One 7-lb. tin of Delhi flour : to be mixed with an equal quantity of Kashmir brown flour.

5 lbs. of jam, syrup or marmalade.

2 tins of Paisley flour.

3 small tins of baking powder.

2 lbs. of tea : coffee needs more milk, but if it is taken the amount of tea may be reduced.

1 tin of cocoa.

6 small tins of condensed milk.

One 7-lb. bag of sugar : your servants will steal both tea and sugar. It is, perhaps, best to arrange with them beforehand how much they may steal with impunity.

5 lbs. of butter : excellent tinned fresh butter can be bought in Srinagar. Its flavour is far better than the usual brands, but it does not keep quite so well.

2 or 3 bottles of Rose's Lime Juice : this is quite necessary when fruit and vegetables cannot be obtained.

2 lbs. of Quaker oats : not oatmeal, which takes far longer to prepare.

4 lbs. of cocogem.

6 packets of candles.

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Also a few tins of sausages, sardines, cheese, etc., according to taste. Also some curry powder, pepper, salt, mustard and a pound or two of raisins, barley, macaroni and corn-flour ; toilet and kitchen, or sunlight soap, bromo and matches and two half bottles of brandy in case of illness. Otherwise alcohol is not at all necessary.

Supplies. At the villages you pass it will usually be possible to get a chicken or two and a few eggs ; generally milk, which of course must be boiled before using, and a sheep. The chief difficulty is vegetables and these are nearly always hard to come by. Coarse turnips and spinach can occasionally be obtained, onions and potatoes more often. Many travellers on the way to Leh have been delighted with a present of excellent English vegetables from the gardens of the Moravian missionaries, who are stationed for years on end in these remote districts. Dried apricots are a great standby, but they do not agree with everybody. If they suit you, a few eaten raw every day, or occasionally stewed, will supply the necessary fruit. It is generally simplest to contract with your cook for him to arrange all supplies and firewood at a fixed daily rate, which should not exceed one and a half rupees per head. The rate should vary with the price of firewood, which is very expensive in places such as Ladakh where there are few trees.

Money. All payments for coolies, supplies, etc., will have to be made in small change. Each coolie should always, if possible, be paid the exact amount due to him, as they do not like having to go to the trouble of getting change, which is not always easy in remote districts, before each can get his share. Notes, except at a few large centres, are useless and it is necessary, therefore, to take a large amount of small change with you from Srinagar.

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At Leh and Skardu there are several merchants, who will generally cash a cheque for a European, and a hundred or two rupees worth of small change can be obtained in these bazaars for notes. Allow, therefore, a sufficient amount of small change to take you to the next large bazaar and carry the rest in notes. It is essential always to have enough money with you in rupee pieces or small change, as if you run short, you will have to send a man for more and stay where you are till he returns, after a delay of perhaps a week or ten days. It is unwise to pack all your money in one load: not because it is likely to be stolen, but because there is always the risk of losing a load when crossing rivers or difficult sections of the road.

Miscellaneous. Your cook will arrange for the necessary cooking things to suit himself, but a watch should be kept to see that he does not do himself too well. Take a hot water plate or two with you, otherwise your food will always be half cold and greasy.

When camping anywhere near a village, boil all the water you use for drinking, and never drink direct from a stream, unless you are quite sure that there is no village on its banks higher up.

Your servants must be given a small allowance to cover the higher cost of food once the Kashmir valley is left. See, therefore, that they do not include among the gear a sackful of rice bought cheaply in Kashmir, for which you will have to pay coolie hire all the way from Srinagar.

At the end of the trip your servants will clamour for buksheesh; in fact they will probably start talking to you about it while the Takht is still in sight on the outward journey. If they have done you well on a two months' trip, give them about half a month's pay. Whatever they

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get they will look at it as if it was mud and will say that the last sahib gave them three times as much. Do not be impressed.

All hill coolies are crawling. Strict precautions to prevent any of their varied livestock from becoming established either on your person, or among your clothes, or bedding should be taken, as otherwise the whole trip may easily be spoilt. Keating's is not really much good as it is difficult to take enough of it with you.

A good camera should certainly be taken. It should be small and light, if possible, but the point is not of very great importance, as the tiffin coolie will generally carry it and a pound or two more or less will not matter to him. If you have no experience of photography, you will get better results if you find out a little about it before starting.

Maps are interesting. The Survey of India publish excellent maps of the whole of the Kashmir valley on a scale of an inch to a mile, and of the remainder of Kashmir on a scale of an inch to four miles. Cockburns are the map agents in Srinagar, but they do not always keep an adequate stock. The Survey of India Map Sales Office is at 15, Wood Street, Calcutta.

Other items that are sure to prove useful are :—

A good unbreakable thermos flask.

A book or two to read in camp.

Writing paper, etc., and a few stamps.

A water-bottle. Serviceable ones can be obtained in Srinagar very cheaply.

A small tiffin basket. Light and strong ones covered with sheep-skin can be bought for about two rupees in Srinagar.

A mosquito net. This is not always necessary, but, if there is the slightest doubt, be on the safe side and take one.

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A pair of hair clippers. One of the servants will have to be instructed how to use them, if you are travelling without a companion.

An axe, a small saw, hammer and pliers are often useful also. But they must be light. A pocket tool set is excellent, provided the quality of the tools, which it contains, is good.

Dark goggles for crossing snow passes. These are essential for the whole party. If for any reason a large snow-field has to be crossed without them, it is said that soot smeared under and round the eyes helps.

Tobacco. Be sure to take enough. The servants will cadge for cigarettes, so an extra supply of cheap ones will prove an economy.

A pair of warm comfortable slippers to wear in camp are pleasant after a tiring march.

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CHAPTER IV.

Early days—Winter Ski-ing and Equipment—Spring Ski-ing —Early Summer Ski-ing—Snow-craft and Avalanches —Gear for a light Ski-ing Camp in early Spring— Mountaineering.

§ 1.

Early days.

SKI-ING is the latest addition to the attractions of Kashmir, and the infinite possibilities that the hills surrounding the valley present to the ski-runner, in winter, spring and early summer, have now become generally recognised, though even before the war occasional attempts at ski-ing were made by officers, whose duties took them to Kashmir in the winter months. Their standard of ski-ing, however, like that of almost all Englishmen at the time, was very low and they soon gave up the experiment. In those days ski-ing was almost unknown outside Scandinavia, where it has been practised since the Dark Ages, and even at Mürren, where to-day a school of British ski-runners competes successfully with the picked teams of Scandinavia and Central Europe, there was only a handful of enthusiasts, whose skill was by no means in proportion to their keenness.

The most persistent of the early pioneers of ski-ing in India was Lieutenant Mason, of the Survey of India, who was stationed in Kashmir during 1911–13. He used his skis in many parts of the valley, but mostly during the spring and early summer, while carrying out survey work in the surrounding mountains. In 1913 he used

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them on his way to the Pamirs when crossing the Burzil pass and thus saved much time, though at the expense of a considerable amount of skin lost in the course of frequent falls on the hard frozen snow.

An attempt was also made in these early days by some enthusiast, whose name has been lost, to induce the postal runners to Ladakh, who have to cross the passes regularly during the winter, and the men who look after the Gilgit telegraph line, to use skis during the many months of each year when the roads to Gilgit and Ladakh are deep in snow. The experiment was a dismal failure, however, as the men preferred to carry their skis as soon as they were beyond the reach of observation, rather than trust their lives to these eccentric boards.

Nor has the Kashmiri in later years shewn any signs of taking kindly to the sport. Even the inhabitants of Tangmarg, who by now have become quite used to seeing people on skis, cannot be induced to learn, and still prefer to plod through the snow shod in the grass sandals, that they, and their ancestors before them, have worn for ages past. Even a good shikari, who was a good deal more sporting than most of his race, and who was obviously impressed by their possibilities, gave up the idea after he had seen the difficulty of controlling skis on steep ground and really bad snow. Some of the other hill people, however, notably men in Gurkha Regiments stationed in places where there is snow each winter, have taken up the sport with enthusiasm, and there are now among them numbers who ski with a fine dash, even if they are somewhat lacking in the art of choosing a good line across country.

But the Kashmiri, though he may never make a ski-runner, is by no means slow across snow-covered ground. When climbing, provided the snow is not very deep and

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soft, he will beat the man on skis more often than not, and they are experts at the art of glissading. Nor is there any great difficulty in persuading Kashmiri coolies to go on long expeditions above the snow line, once the bitter cold of mid-winter has given place to the less Arctic conditions of March and April, and provided they are supplied with warm clothing and dark glasses, to protect their eyes from the terrific glare of a sub-tropical sun on the snow-fields.

The War put an end to these early efforts, and it was not till some years after peace had been declared that conditions in India became sufficiently settled to allow of much attention being paid to such things as ski-ing. In February 1924 two residents of Srinagar spent a week in Gulmarg and found excellent snow conditions, but no sustained effort was made.

About this time, however, there were several officers stationed in the plains, but within sight of the snows, who had done a good deal of ski-ing before coming out to India and found that they missed it very badly. Their enquiries regarding the possibilities of obtaining ski-ing on the snow-covered hills, which they could see from their station, met with replies that were discouraging. No one had ever done such a thing before, and that was held to be a conclusive argument why it should never be done at all. The snow, they were told, would be quite different from anything to be found in Europe. True it was white, but there the resemblance ceased. It was quite different in all other respects and was not at all suitable for ski-ing. Also there was no ski-ing equipment to be obtained in India.

However, a few days spent in reconnaissance during 1925 soon proved that the snow was not so very different from that to be found among the mountains of Europe, and

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that there was plenty of it. Skis and other necessary equipment were ordered from London, and in the following summer the Ski Club of India was formed and ski-ing became firmly established, with Kashmir as its headquarters.

Those, who flatter themselves that they are independent and prefer to do things on their own initiative, may ask why it was necessary to form a club before ski-ing could be indulged in. The chief reason is that, at any rate in winter, it is necessary to live in something more substantial than a tent, and the provision of a hut, or the opening of a hotel, entails so much expense that individual effort is immediately ruled out and a certain amount of organisation becomes necessary. Once the force of this argument is admitted the other advantages of a club do not need enumerating, but the list is a long one for all that.

Since its formation in 1926, the club has never looked back. The number of members has increased annually, excellent ski-ing has been enjoyed every year, and much new ski-ing ground has been opened up. Two huts have recently been presented to the club. One of them is situated on Killanmarg and is useful, not only as a base for long expeditions, but as a convenient place in which to enjoy a sheltered lunch on cold or stormy days. The other is on the far side of Apharwat, and, by making use of it, expeditions entailing one or two nights away from Gulmarg can be undertaken even in the winter months.

Several races are held during the Xmas meeting and a team race takes place each March. So far the club has not provided either a skating rink or a toboggan run, as the demand has not been sufficient to justify the expense, but, with rapidly increasing membership, these amenities are likely to appear before very long.

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§ 2.

Winter Ski-ing and Equipment.

The season starts, as in Europe, in December, but the amount of snow may be somewhat scanty among the lower hills until about the beginning of the New Year. At present, the only place where the visitor can hope to get decent ski-ing during the winter is at Gulmarg, which is situated about nine thousand feet above sea level. (See Map Sheet No. 43 j/8.)

As a first step the intending visitor should apply to the Secretary of the Ski Club of India for membership. The subscription is very moderate and membership will result in a substantial saving in current expenditure, and will also simplify very much the arrangements that will have to be made. Letters should be addressed to the Secretary, either care of Messrs. Pestonjee and Co., Srinagar, who are the agents of the club in Kashmir, and who for several years were responsible for all the catering arrangements at Gulmarg during the winter, or else care of Messrs. Grindlay and Co., Peshawar, the club's bankers. Excluding the cost of the journey and the cost of any equipment, ten to eleven rupees a day should cover all expenses.

The first arrivals usually turn up at Gulmarg a few days before Xmas, but several days' notice should be given so that the necessary arrangements can be made. At Xmas there is usually no difficulty in getting to Kashmir along the Jhelum valley road, which is not often blocked by snow until a month or so later. When it is blocked, it is necessary to use the Abbottabad route.

Arrangements should be made for a motor car to be ready at Rawalpindi, but, even if a very early start is made,

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it is not always possible to get through to Gulmarg in one day, and a halt for the night may be necessary at one of the dâk bungalows along the road. Or, if the section between Rampur and Domel, over which motoring is not permitted after dark, is passed in time, the night can be spent at Tangmarg, where the motor road ends about two thousand feet below Gulmarg. The bungalow at Tangmarg is usually kept open when travellers are expected, but there are no catering arrangements. It is better, therefore, to be on the safe side and to stay at one of the bungalows on the main road, which are always open, and where meals can be obtained.

It is a steep climb up from Tangmarg, but ponies can be used, unless the snow is too deep. Coolies are available in considerable numbers to carry up luggage, but heavy boxes, or cabin trunks should not be brought. The rate of payment for coolies and ponies varies according to the state of the weather and the condition of the path, so it is not possible to give any reliable guide regarding these items. If in doubt, make no rash promises before enquiring what the correct rate is, as, if you are a new-comer to the country, the good men of Tangmarg will realise it at once and will attempt to cheat you.

It is necessary to take your own bedding with you. A large number of blankets is advisable, for, although a roaring log fire may make your room pleasantly warm when you go to bed, it soon dies down, and, by the small hours of the morning, you will be glad of everything you can lay your hands on. Servants can be obtained at the hotel, so do not take a personal servant, unless he is a hill man and knows what real cold is, and is prepared to face it. Otherwise he will become ill and miserable and will be more nuisance than he is worth.

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A motor-car from Rawalpindi and back will probably cost not less than a hundred and twenty-five rupees, but, if economy is an object, a large party could arrange to use a motor bus. This would work out considerably cheaper, but it would be rather slower and not so comfortable.

In mid-winter a clear hour's daylight should be allowed to get from Tangmarg to the hotel, either by the coolie track, or the more circuitous, but less steep, main path. If less daylight than this remains, the night should be spent at Tangmarg, unless the coolies are willing to start up with your gear. It is not fair to make them start later than this against their will, as they are nearly all scantily clothed and badly shod, and, if they are caught out at night in a snow-storm, they are liable to be badly frost-bitten.

For about a month over Xmas and the New Year the club arranges for a part of Nedou's Hotel to be opened, and usually about a hundred people stay there, but by about the middle of January most of them have departed again, and, if a minimum of about five persons do not stay, the hotel is closed. It will always be re-opened, however, (or arrangements made to open one of the huts that are used by summer visitors) if a sufficient number of people apply at any time between then and the middle of March, when there are always a large number of members at Gulmarg, some of whom usually remain until the first of the summer visitors make an appearance. The idea of living in a hut in the depths of winter may strike anyone, who has not visited Gulmarg in the summer, as savouring altogether too much of the simple life, but, in reality, these huts are very comfortable wood-built bungalows, adequately furnished and with several rooms, each with its own fireplace. At present dinner clothes

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are not needed, even over Xmas week, but, unfortunately, there are already signs that this blissful state of simplicity is unlikely to survive very long.

It is not necessary to buy any very elaborate equipment for ski-ing at Gulmarg, especially if a short visit is all that can be managed. The club have a supply of skis and sticks, which can be hired for a small daily charge, and also keep for sale a stock of wax and other small items that may be needed. Pestonjee's generally have a certain amount of ski-ing equipment for sale which they obtain from England. However, if a stay of a month or longer is to be made, it will be more satisfactory and almost as cheap to send for the necessary gear from a good London firm. This will take time to arrange and customs duty will have to be paid, but, even so, it will not work out very much more expensive than hiring, and, if a ski-ing visit is to be an annual event, it will prove to be far cheaper in the end.

A first-class pair of skis, delivered in India, complete with bindings, should not cost more than about eighty rupees and they will last for several seasons if proper care is taken of them. Quite fairly good skis and sticks are made by the Kashmir General Agency at Srinagar, but, though their workmanship is perfectly satisfactory, they cannot turn out skis that can compare with a European-made article, as there is a great difficulty in obtaining properly seasoned wood. This obstacle is now to some extent being overcome and before very long locally made skis may, perhaps, be perfectly serviceable.

The only other expensive item that is necessary is a pair of ski-ing boots, and these MUST be obtained from Europe, as no firm in India can yet make a satisfactory article. They should be the best that you can afford and by a firm that has experience of this type of work.

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When being measured for them a thick pair of socks should be worn and the boots should be made to fit comfortably over them.

Many people habitually wear boots that are far too big for them, but, in practice, boots that are too big are almost as bad as ones that are too small, because control over the skis is lost if the foot can move about inside the boot. There should be ample room for the toes, but the uppers should fit fairly tightly and give adequate support to the ankles. It must be remembered that new boots will stretch considerably after some use, so that a pair, which will take one thick pair of socks when new, will stretch sufficiently to take two pairs after they have been in use for some time, and this is ample for all ordinary purposes. A new pair of boots should be oiled two or three times with Mars oil, but, after this has been done, they should only be oiled very occasionally and then sparingly. Boots that are sodden with oil are cold to the feet.

When boots are being dried after use they should on no account be put anywhere near a fire. The best of Indian servants cannot be trusted about this, and it is far better to put yourself to a little trouble, even at the risk of getting a reputation for fussiness, than to have your only pair of boots ruined, and your holiday spoilt, through the carelessness of a servant. A wood fire that is smouldering, and near to which a pair of boots has been placed with apparently perfect safety, will blaze up, give out enormous heat for a short time, and then die down again, and you will come back from dinner to find your boots mysteriously ruined.

If both skis and boots are obtained from the same firm, they should be fitted before they are sent out, otherwise you will have to do it yourself. This is a matter of

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some difficulty if you have never done it before. It is worth while, however, to take some pains to ensure that a good fit is made, as otherwise it is difficult to control the skis properly, and the boots may be twisted out of shape and so spoilt irretrievably. Most bindings nowadays have adjustable screw-on toe-irons. These should first be loosely fixed to the skis about one inch forward of the maker's mark. When this has been done, centre the boot carefully on the skis and screw down the inside toe-iron, so that its whole length lies close up against the edge of the boot. Then tap the outside toe-iron inwards, until it also fits close against the welt of the boot, and screw it home. The whole length of both toe-irons should lie close against the boot, so that, when it is lightly pushed forward against them, there is no sign of lateral play. If the toe-irons are properly fitted, the heel-strap can be left comparatively loose and there will be perfect control of the skis, which is at once lost as soon as there is any play between the boots and the irons. When correctly fitted, the toes of the boots should project far enough through the irons just to allow you to kneel with some difficulty on your skis, and no further, otherwise a bad forward fall will be painful and may result in a torn tendon or other injury.

The method of fitting boots to skis has been described at some length, and at the risk of being wearisome, because in Kashmir it is more than likely that you will have to do the work yourself, and comparatively few people seem to realise the great difference in comfort and control between a good and a poor fit. Take the first opportunity of watching some one who knows how to do the job at work.

Dark goggles are absolutely necessary. They should be really dark, and, when out in a mist through which the sun is nearly breaking, it is essential to wear them, even

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though it may not appear necessary at the time. The glare may not seem strong, but, if you do not wear goggles, your eyes will give out after an hour or two, with consequences that may be awkward if you are alone or far from home.

A pair of good sealskins to attach to your skis when climbing are necessary. Attempts have been made to make them in India out of Barasingh, or Sambhur hide, with the hair clipped short. The hair of these animals, however, is too soft and brittle, and skins made from them are not satisfactory. It is far better, therefore, to get a pair from Europe. The cost is small and they will last a long time if they are soaked in castor oil before and after each season. Skins must never be put anywhere near a fire to dry.

Clothing does not require very careful thought, provided it is of some smooth material that will not collect snow, and provided it is fairly wind and waterproof. Suits with zip fastening pockets and patent gadgets are all very well in their way, but they cost a good deal and are really not very much more efficient than a well thought out makeshift at half the price ; and they need a certain amount of living up to. A pair of blue serge trousers, made to strap tightly round the top of the boot, and loosely cut at the knees and seat, so as to allow ample room for violent contortions, and a coat, or pull-over, made of the same material, which will button up tightly round the neck and wrists, is good enough for all ordinary work in the winter. In the warmer days and with the harder snow of late spring, an old suit of plus fours is perfectly serviceable. Several thin under-garments are far better than one thick one. Thin woollen vests and viyella shirts are excellent.

Gloves must be of some hard wearing waterproof material and should, if possible, be obtained from a reliable

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firm in London. Gauntlets are the best and, if they are to be used in the extreme cold of mid-winter, there should be only one compartment for all four fingers and one for the thumb. The thinner they are the better, provided warmth and dryness are not sacrificed too much, as, with thin gloves, the ski-sticks are less likely to be dropped inadvertently, than which there is nothing more infuriating when running fast. A spare pair of thin gloves should also be carried for use in case of emergency, and a thin silk scarf is useful with which to protect the ears if a very cold wind is encountered. A light woollen sweater, a spare binding, a strong knife and a piece of black and another of paraffin wax, in case the snow is sticky, should never be forgotten.

The only serviceable receptacle for the various things that you will have to carry with you is a rucksack, and the best kind is a Bergans, which is not obtainable in India, though various other patterns which are fairly satisfactory can be bought in Bombay and Calcutta. One that has an aluminium frame, which allows a passage for the air between the rucksack and the back, is by far the most satisfactory. Small rucksacks are a mistake. When they are full they bounce about on your back like a football, so get a large one, which will hold a great deal in emergency, and which will be only half full with a normal load. Before setting out for a whole-day trip there should always be the following items in your rucksack :—

Your lunch.
Some spare chocolate.
Spare gloves.
Spare binding.
A sharp knife and some strong twine.
A warm, but light, sweater.

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And, if you are going a long way, or high up, where you will have to depend on your own efforts to get back safely in spite of any minor mishap, the following additional items should be distributed among the party :—

A spare ski tip and repairing outfit.
A prismatic compass.
A simple first-aid outfit.
A small flask of brandy.
A large-scale map of the district.

An aneroid is not essential, but is often of great use in a mist and is always interesting to use in a new country.

The following things will also usually be worth their weight, even on a short expedition, if they are distributed among the party :—

An oblong piece of light wind-proof silk, measuring about eight feet by three feet. Spread this on two ski sticks and it will keep off that icy zephyr, which spoils so many lunches in the open during the winter even on fine days.

A thermos flask of hot tea.

A small flask of something warming to mix with the tea. This will give you courage with which to face the first steep slopes on the run down after a chilly lunch.

(The three items immediately above are only desirable in the winter ; in the warmer spring days they are superfluous.)

A Camera. The Leitz Leica is far the best. It is expensive to buy, though not to run. It takes very small negatives, which have always to be enlarged, but it is small, light and compact, and thirty-six negatives are contained on each spool. A telescopic attachment can be used

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with it and the shutter works up to 1/500ths of a second, so its range of utility is very large. Whatever camera is used, it is essential that it should be small and light, otherwise ski-ing will have to be sacrificed to photography.

In the spring all of the above items may be left behind with perfect safety on short expeditions, but, if you decide to travel light and so avoid the nuisance of a full and heavy rucksack, you must expect to get caught out occasionally in bad weather and to suffer a good deal from cold, or wet, before you arrive back home. And you will be certain to break a binding at the top of a long climb, and so have to plod home on foot, at least once in every season; nor must you expect any sympathy or help on such occasions from others more prudent than yourself.

In the winter and early spring it is not necessary to wear a topee, but it is advisable to do so during the middle of the day after the beginning of April. The sun is far more likely to cause damage through the eyes by excessive glare than in any other way, and it is essential that really dark glasses should be worn as soon as sprin conditions set in, and on sunny days during the winter.

The glare off the snow causes the most intense sun-burn, and exposure to it for one afternoon may be sufficient to peel the skin completely off, a process that is not only disfiguring, but which is also extremely painful and will be quite sufficient to ruin a holiday completely. As a protection, Pond's, or some other cream should be rubbed well into the skin every evening, and before going out for the day the face, neck and hands, and particularly the nose and lips, should be smeared with Sechaye or Anti-Lux pomade. On no account use anything else, unless you know definitely that it is suitable; otherwise

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your face may fry as well as peel. Men will find that a beard several days old is an excellent, if unattractive protection.

During the first few days at Gulmarg most people will feel the effects of the height and will not be inclined to do anything very strenuous. If natural impatience permits, it is far the wisest course to take the first two or three days fairly easily. This will allow one's muscles to get fit without overtaxing them and so ensures the robust health that is so essential if a ski-ing holiday is to be enjoyed to the full.

In winter, *i.e.*, December, January and February, the usual routine at Gulmarg is to start at about ten in the morning, by which time the sun has had time to warm the air to a certain extent, and to climb through the woods towards Killanmarg and then go higher, or stop at the hut, according to the skill and energy of the party and the state of the weather. Occasionally a few hardy people spend the night at the hut, in order to make an early start for a long expedition over the top of Apharwat, towards Mingan Dor or Linyan Marg. The winter, however, is not an ideal time to carry out long expeditions. The days are short, the cold at great heights is often severe, and, more often than not, the snow above about twelve thousand feet is spoilt by the wind. Also, the consequences of an accident, or of being benighted, are likely to be much more serious then than later in the year, when the days are longer and the nights are not so terribly cold. At this time of year, therefore, the ski-runner at Gulmarg will probably be well advised to stick to fairly low levels, where, as a rule, he will get better running and more pleasant conditions, if not the moral uplift that is gained from battling with the elements on the heights.

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On the way to Lone Tree.

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Lone Tree, Avalanche Shoulder (in suitable conditions) and the route up Xmas Gulley to the top of Apharwat and the snow-fields that lie on the further side, all of which give runs varying between two and four thousand feet, are the best of the moderately long expeditions. But the cream of the ski-ing at Gulmarg during the winter is to be found among the woods. This wood-running is far better than is usually obtainable at a Swiss resort, and the beauty and charm of these great deserted forests, lying silent under their covering of snow, is beyond description.

The usual routes through the woods from Killanmarg are excellent. Gully Gully, Central Gully (in fast conditions), Gadarene and Lone Tree Gulch give as amusing a thousand feet of running as can be found anywhere, and the coolie track down to Tangmarg, when there is sufficient snow, provides a run of two thousand feet that is both varied in character and full of difficulties. These are only the more obvious runs ; there are dozens of others, and the woods have not yet been half explored by ski-runners. Beginners will find ample Nursery slopes leading from the door of the hotel, where they can learn the first elements of the art of ski-ing before venturing on more difficult ground.

§ 3.

Spring Ski-ing.

When March ushers in the spring conditions completely change. Gone are the days when the forests lie frozen ten feet deep in powder snow ; when the coal-black dipper, flitting along the silent stream beds of Killanmarg, is the sole sign of the living world of birds and

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beasts; when, in the early afternoon, the northern slopes of Apharwat throw cold and deep blue shadows across the level snows of the marg; and, as darkness falls, tired skiers, clothed in postheens and Gilgit boots, with a glass of toddy at hand, and a kettle simmering in readiness to make another brew, gather round a roaring pine-log fire. In their place are days of glorious sunshine, and nights that are cold, but not too cold to enjoy a fast run under the light of a full moon, with a blazing fire at the rendezvous throwing fantastic shadows among the tall surrounding deodars.

As the power of the sun increases, the snow retreats into the higher hills, followed in close pursuit by masses of wild flowers, the hardiest of which burst into blossom immediately the ground is free from snow and star the wet brown earth with flecks of gold. The first of the hills to become clear, before even the warmer sheltered woods, are the exposed ridges, where the snow can find no resting place from the fierce winds of winter. And it is on these ridges that the ski-runner, on fine and windless days in the spring, basks in the westering sun, while he waits for the snow-slopes below him to fall into shadow and harden sufficiently to bear him with speed and safety to the valley below.

Here, if he is lucky and has remained quiet, he may be rewarded by the sight of a pair of chuckor, or their nobler cousin the snow-cock. These birds pair off early in the year, and in a spell of fine settled weather wander far up the hill-sides on domestic explorations. Or a vast eagle with creaking wings and sharp enquiring eyes may plane past within a few feet of his outstretched form. Or, if he has penetrated beyond the confines of the valley and across the passes to the north, which form a tenuous connection with the vast chill continent of Central Asia,

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the skier may, perhaps, share his ridge with shy inquisitive marmots, fresh from their long winter sleep, with their chesnut-brown coats contrasting strongly with the brilliant green of the first new grass. And his siesta will be disturbed by their shrill whistles of alarm, which imitate exactly the note of a referee's whistle, and put one in mind of misty November afternoons spent in the stands at Twickenham.

Ski-ing in the spring, though it is delightful in many ways, never quite equals winter ski-ing at its best, and the most perfect spring snow is never quite so good as really fast un-tracked powder. This un-tracked powder snow of which we dream, however, is unfortunately not of very common occurrence, though it is to be found a good deal oftener in Kashmir than in crowded Switzerland, where for miles round each resort the snow is beaten flat, or cut into icy ruts by the tracks of countless skis. In winter, too, many days are spoilt by snow-storms, cold winds and exhausting track cutting, which is very much harder work at eleven thousand feet than it is at the more moderate heights at which we usually ski in Europe.

Most of these drawbacks no longer occur later in the year, and the general average of ski-ing in the spring is probably higher than in winter, for in almost any weather good running should be obtainable, provided (and this proviso is of absolute importance) the ski-runner knows the laws that govern the effect of sun and wind and general thaw upon snow, and is prepared to give the matter sufficient thought to apply these laws intelligently. If not, little enjoyable ski-ing will be obtained and the risk of coming to grief in an avalanche will be great.

In their essentials these laws are not very difficult to master, and a person of average intelligence should be able to get a good working knowledge of them in an

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evening spent in the careful study of chapters two, three and four of Mr. Arnold Lunn's excellent book, "Alpine Ski-ing at all Heights and Seasons." But a superficial knowledge of the theory of the problem, though essential as a ground work, is of little use unless it is constantly put to practical test. For there is a very decided difference between arriving at the right answer to a problem in comfort and at leisure, and in making a correct and prompt decision on a mountain side. The study of snow and avalanches, dull at first sight, becomes exceedingly interesting with the acquisition of a little knowledge.

An average day of spring ski-ing at Gulmarg, or elsewhere in Kashmir, entails a start not much later than four in the morning. Grim, but necessary. A climb of two or three hours, starting by lantern light through the woods, with a coolie, perhaps, to carry your skis over the hard frozen snow, is followed by breakfast in the first warmth of the newly-risen sun. Then follows a glorious run home over snow that the sun has softened to the depth of an inch or two, and which is so fast that even the gentlest slopes give grand straight running. If this early morning run has been missed, there is no more good ski-ing to be obtained until the snow begins to harden again in the evening, unless some route that lies entirely in the shadow can be found, because, as the sun gets hotter, the snow becomes wet and sodden, when it is not only very liable to avalanche, but also is a vile surface on which to ski.

A spring dawn on Killanmarg is very beautiful, so beautiful that any description of it would be futile. And an attempt to capture upon a canvas the glorious gold of the morning sun as it first touches the topmost ridge of the Apharwat massif, or the deep and dark-blue shadows that fill the valley, or the distant airy lightness

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of Nanga Parbat, floating high in the cloudless sky, would be foredoomed to failure.

But these beauties of nature, appeal though they may to the soul, have no less stimulating an effect upon the appetite, and the second breakfast on returning to the valley is a serious and prolonged affair. Midday finds Gulmarg wrapped in slumber, and it is not until the shadows in the woods are ruling long black lines across the clearings among the trees that the time arrives to set out for the evening run.

On the descent in the evening the first part will be on hard frozen snow, the middle section on a somewhat softer surface, and the last bit through the woods, unless we have timed the run so late that there is barely light enough to see, will be on trap crust, and we shall come home cursing and quite forgetful of the glorious snow that we enjoyed above.

When these early mornings become wearisome a start can be made later in the day, and the warm midday hours can be spent in a leisurely climb. But, if this course is adopted, the greatest care must be exercised in choosing a safe route for the ascent, as most of the spring avalanches fall in the middle of the day and during the early part of the afternoon.

The early spring is the best time of year for long expeditions ; for exploring the distant peaks and valleys that have beckoned to us during the winter, and for crossing the sky-line, to discover what lies in the unknown country on the further side. In the spring the hours of daylight are long, and the cold at night is not usually severe enough to make it a very serious matter, if a party is delayed, and overtaken by darkness, when still some way from home. The snow in the spring, too, is not affected by wind, and consequently is just as likely to be good

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on the wind-swept tops as it is in the sheltered valleys lower down.

From Gulmarg some very pleasant two, or three-day, or even longer expeditions can be made on ski. Either in the direction of Khan Pathri and Linyanmarg, where one of the club huts is situated, and from which all the country lying behind Apharwat and the Frozen Lakes, where there is a large choice of runs, is easily accessible. Or, better still, to the further side of the Ferozepore nullah, towards Sunset Peak, Hadbal, Shin Mahinyo and the Tosh Maidan (map sheet No. 43^{k}_{5}.)

A light camp is necessary in order to carry out any of the expeditions beyond the Ferozepore nullah, as it is not possible to return to Gulmarg the same day, and there is no hut in this neighbourhood where shelter can be obtained. Camping among the snow is not so difficult, nor so uncomfortable, as it might appear at first sight, provided the details are carefully thought out in advance. At the end of this chapter a list of necessary items will be found, and, if this is consulted beforehand, it should be a matter of no great difficulty to arrange for a light and comfortable camp.

Coolies, who will be prepared to take such a camp up to about eleven thousand feet, and either stay there for a night or two, or else return when required, can usually be obtained from Tangmarg. If two or three people combined to share expenses, a more elaborate camp could be sent up, as the pay of the coolies, who, of course, have to be given about double the summer rate, or even more, and which is the most expensive item, could then be divided. In this way a week or ten days could be spent without any real discomfort, certainly no more than would be cheerfully borne, for example, on a shooting trip

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after ovis ammon to the further parts of Ladakh, and some very fine ski-ing would be obtained.

In the spring, most of the climbing will be done on hard snow, and, if the surface is so hard that a man on foot can proceed without sinking in, it is the quickest and least tiring method to make the ascent in this way. Coolies can often be taken on the first part of the climb to carry the skis, an economy of effort that is always advisable at the start of a long expedition. When coolies are not obtainable, it is often possible to drag the skis by means of a long piece of stout string, one end of which is fastened through the points of the skis and the other tied round the waist. When dragging skis in this way, it is necessary to tie them together at the toe-irons, so that they will not run apart.

Climbing steep ground on really hard snow in ski boots is most exhausting, unless they are heavily nailed, and nailed boots have several disadvantages, the chief of which is that they are cold to the feet. Messrs. Dowie and Marshall, Ltd., of 455, West Strand, London, sell a cheap and simple contrivance that is almost indispensable when ski-ing in the spring. It fits unobtrusively into the arch of the boot, and, when opened, folds forward over the sole and presents several small teeth, which give a good grip on the hardest snow. They are, however, no substitute for crampons, which will only be necessary if real climbing, as opposed to ski-ing, is attempted. Crampons with less than eight points should not be bought.

Somewhat later, in April or early May, when the snow-line has receded to about ten thousand feet, the best ski-ing will be obtained from a camp which can be moved forward as each section of the country is thoroughly explored. Such a camp should be pitched somewhere about the highest level of the trees, where, in sunny places,

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patches of earth will be showing through the fast melting snow, and where firewood can be obtained in any quantity, so that, when the evening air begins to fall chill and the sun has set, a roaring fire can be built.

Early starts will still be necessary and careful consideration must be given to the orientation of the hills on which morning expeditions are to be made. Otherwise, the sun, which now rises at an absurdly early hour, will be upon the slopes while the skier is still only half way to the top, and the descent will be on soft slow snow that will be a poor reward for the early rising and long toil uphill.

At this time of year the sun is so powerful that its effect on the snow is very rapid, and the margin of error that can be allowed in timing the descent is extremely small : far smaller than in Europe, where the less powerful sun affects the snow more slowly, and where excellent ski-ing can be obtained for some hours later in the morning.

§ 4.

Early Summer Ski-ing.

As the spring wears on the snow melts rapidly, until the hill-sides are scarred almost to their summits with streaks of brown, which soon change into a fresh and vivid green, starred with patches of colour, as the wild flowers, which grow on all these hills in great profusion, burst into blossom. However, ski-ing that will well repay the effort can still be found in the beds of sheltered nullahs, down which avalanches roared on warm damp days in winter, and which formed traps for wind-blown snow, which still lies in them to a depth of many feet, long after the more exposed hill-sides are bare.

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PEJANPATHRI AND BASAM GALI, THE PICK OF THE SPRING SKI-ING COUNTRY.

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By making use of these nullah beds a thin ribbon of snow can often be found leading down a thousand feet or more below the general level of the snow-line, and in this way skis can frequently be used to within a few yards of a warm and sheltered camping site. A good example of such a place is to be found on Killanmarg, where snow still lies in Xmas Gulley and in the big nullah to the west of the hut, when almost the whole of Apharwat is bare.

Ski-ing is very pleasant in the late spring and early summer, but it has not quite the charm that we experience when the year is younger. It is too easy. The mountains of moderate height, with which the ski-runner is chiefly concerned, allow themselves to be trifled with in a way that they would never tolerate in the winter, when their fastnesses are guarded by miles of snow-fields and their flanks echo to the roar of falling avalanches. But, if we venture among the giants, we shall find them always on their guard; they never allow themselves to be caught in a familiar mood. The snow, too, needs less careful study in the summer, and, as almost every slope that can avalanche, has already done so under the influence of the hot sun of the past weeks, there is not the same need for caution.

The sun now rises so early that it is useless to attempt to reach the top before the snow has become soft, unless a sleepless night is bargained for. So, ordinarily, there is no need to get up at crack of dawn and a comfortable breakfast can be made before starting. Coolies can be taken to carry the skis and lunch and camera to the top, and the day can be spent very pleasantly strolling unburdened up a ridge. A stout pair of walking shoes, which can be changed at the top for heavier and more cumbersome ski-ing boots, will add very materially to

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the comfort of the climb, if, as is usual, the upward route leads mostly over ground that is bare of snow.

At this time of the year there is much to be noted by anyone interested in natural history.

Countless Alpine flowers of many varieties grow in every sheltered nook. On each sunny stone bask little bronzy lizards, while every now and then a long-drawn plaintive whistle from far above marks the vantage point of a ram-chuckor. Sometimes a flock of choughs may be seen tumbling in the erratic currents of wind which sweep round the crags, and there are smaller birds in plenty, though their identification is not easy. Occasional butterflies, blown far from their proper surroundings, flutter upwards on their way to certain death among the cold snow-fields above, and, in the remoter districts, traces of ibex or red bear may be discovered, or a herd of barasingh may be seen, though the stags will have shed their antlers and the new growth will hardly have started.

At the top there is no hurry, and we can bask the afternoon away in the sun and enjoy the glorious view at our leisure. The whole of the valley of Kashmir lies spread out beneath with every detail clear for miles, fading at last into the blue and misty horizon. In the distance we can trace the thin dark line of poplar trees that border the road to Srinagar, while further still, and half hidden by the heat haze, we can just pick out the faint silver sheen of the Wular lake. In the opposite direction that small dark smudge can only be the Takht, though it forms so insignificant a feature in this majestic panorama, that it is difficult to believe that it towers over the capital, and is the most conspicuous natural feature of the towns-folk's view.

The summit of Haramouk and the dog's-tooth peak of Kolahoi stand out clear in the purer air of the upper

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regions, with their lower slopes but dimly discernible through the valley haze. Haramouk looks so near in the strong light of the setting sun that we can pick out every detail of the icy curtains and sheer cliffs that guard its flanks, and it seems as if an outstretched hand might almost touch it, in spite of the miles of sun-filled air that lie between. Further to the left, Gulmarg lies hidden in the dark folds of a curtain of cloud, which stretches in one vast sweep towards the north, and hides the whole of Nanga Parbat from our sight. And it is not until the shadows have engulfed the lower slopes, and the sun has almost sunk behind the Murree hills, that we need strap on our skis and start on the descent, in order to be back in camp before the long twilight has faded into night.

The run down through the chilly evening air is one long-drawn delight. Even if the snow is not quite so fast, perhaps, as we should like, its surface is true and flatters our running, and snow that will do that can be forgiven much. The last thousand feet to the camp are down the narrow track of an old avalanche bed, which lies in deep shadow, and we have to place our turns quickly and accurately in order to avoid an occasional boulder, which, loosened by the melting of the snow on the slopes above, has come to rest here after its headlong career down the mountain side. And we have to keep a careful watch for the place where the stream, which flows along the bottom of the nullah, has recently burst through the covering of snow, that hides it for nine months of every year, and which cannot be distinguished in the dim light until the points of our skis are right upon it.

This pleasant lazy ski-ing is, of course, only possible at medium heights, up to a maximum of about sixteen thousand feet. If the higher mountains are explored,

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the ski-runner must be guided by the same rules of caution, and must be just as upon the alert, as if it were the winter. And no novice should venture so far afield until he has gained some experience on smaller hills, or unless he can rely upon some more experienced friend who will accompany him.

The most easily accessible country for summer ski-ing is that lying to the south and west of Apharwat, for which the hut belonging to the ski club near Linyanmarg makes an excellent base. This hut should, of course, not be used by anyone, who is not a member of the club, without previously obtaining the permission of the Secretary. In this neighbourhood a week or more of good and varied ski-ing would be obtainable, in all ordinary years, until the end of May, and further to the west, in the vicinity of Khan Pathri, there is another large expanse of country, that well deserves a visit.

Another easily accessible district has Pojanpathri as its western limit, thence, through the Tosh Maidan, Jamianwali Gali and Tutakuti, it extends towards the Banihal pass in the east. This has also been recommended as being suitable for early spring ski-ing, but in the summer it is, of course, very much more easily accessible, and a longer time can be spent in camp without undergoing any discomfort, or the likelihood of being weather-bound for any length of time. In this neighbourhood there is an enormous area of first class ski-ing ground and a whole season would not exhaust its possibilities. Some of the peaks rising to the south, which form the main backbone of the Pir Panjal range, and among which Tutakuti, which attains the height of 15,560 feet, is the highest, would give some interesting, if not very intricate, rock climbing, with which to vary the ski-ing. This climbing, however, would not be good enough, nor sufficiently

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JAMIANWALI GALI IN EARLY JUNE.

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extensive, to warrant a special expedition being made in order to enjoy it.

All supplies are easy to arrange. Srinagar is never very far away, and rarely more than one day's march for a coolie, except at the extreme western end of the range, when Gulmarg is close at hand and can be relied on to supply everything that will be needed.

Once the snow has receded to the level of the highest trees, the upland meadows are invaded by hosts of Gujars, who bring their enormous herds of cattle to graze on the rich new grass. Milk and an occasional sheep can usually be obtained from them, but not much else, and, with memories of past oppression at the hands of native officials, they are sometimes sullen and refuse to supply anything, even after being offered more than the market price. It will be necessary, therefore, to employ two coolies, who will continually move between the camp and Srinagar or Gulmarg, bringing letters, and such things as eggs and fruit, that will not keep for any length of time.

Still further afield there is any amount of good ski-ing ground, but these more distant parts have not yet been properly explored by ski-runners. Much of the most promising country has also the attraction of big game to recommend it, and there is no reason why an expedition early in the year should not combine ski-ing with shooting.

Above Sonamarg (map sheet No. 43 N), between the Sind and Liddar valleys, there appears to be some excellent country awaiting the enterprising summer skier, and the long glacier that almost encircles Kolahoi would give first class running certainly up to the end of June. But nobody without previous experience of glaciers should venture upon it alone, as it is badly crevassed in many places.

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This part of Kashmir is not practicable, except at prohibitive expense, until fairly late in the spring. There are no huts in existence and the snow lies to a great depth in the narrow valleys, up which the approach to this district has to be made, until late in the season. It would, therefore, be a very difficult matter to manage a camp early in the year. The lines of communication would be long and difficult to keep open, coolies would be hard to obtain, and supplies would be scanty. As soon as funds permit the Ski Club intends to build a hut somewhere near the head of the Liddar valley, provided the consent of the Kashmir State authorities can be obtained, which is not always an easy matter. Such a hut would make much of this country easily accessible.

In the immediate vicinity of Haramouk some good running should be obtainable without much difficulty during the early summer, and in both these districts ski-ing could be combined with climbing to the advantage of both.

At Dras, which is situated on the main road to Leh, six marches from Srinagar, there is a lot of good country, and an experienced party would be able to get some very good sport in this district during April and early May. The cold would probably be fairly severe and Dras is swept by violent winds, but the dâk bungalow could be used as a base and a light camp taken to the starting point for the longer, or more distant climbs. The chief drawback to this district is the time that it takes to get there. There is also the disadvantage that, until the middle of May, by which time the best of the ski-ing would be over, the authorities give no assistance to travellers, who wish to cross the Zoji La. This entails a deal of wearisome haggling with the coolies at Gund, two days' journey distant from Srinagar, regarding the amount to be paid them for the journey from there to Dras, as

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there are no coolies obtainable at the intervening stages. The matter will take several hours to arrange, and it will very probably be necessary to pay each man between five and seven rupees for the four stages, which makes the trip rather expensive. Later in the year the State provides coolies at the rate of about one anna a mile.

There would be quite a good chance of getting a red bear near Dras, and possibly an ibex too, but the latter would not be likely to have much of a head.

The mountains rising above the Zoji La are worth exploring on ski about the end of June from a camp somewhere near the top of the pass, but this is no place in which to loiter before the summer is well established, and even then only when the weather is settled. And there is a delightful-looking shoulder rising high above the rest-house at Machoi that demands attention; so far it has never had the imprint of skis upon more than the first fifty feet of its surface.

The garrison at Gilgit now have several pairs of skis and enliven the monotony of the long winter months with their use. These must surely form the furthest outposts of the realm of the skis, which has extended in so remarkable a way during the last two or three decades, after lying dormant, buried in the upland valleys of Scandinavia, for so many centuries.

§ 5.

Snow-craft and Avalanches.

a. General.

The ski-runner in India will find that, owing to the almost complete lack of local skill or knowledge, he will have to rely entirely on his own efforts, not only to find

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the best country and to obtain the best conditions, but also to avoid running unwarrantable risks. At the eastern end of the Himalayas there is now a considerable body of men, who have been used as porters on the expeditions to climb Everest, Kanchenjunga and the other giants of the Sikkim group, which are now of almost annual occurrence, and who have proved their excellence on many a long day and in many a tight place. These men have attained to a considerable degree of skill, but it is unlikely that even they would ever develop the initiative necessary in order to reach the standard of a good Swiss guide, though, in their own sphere, they certainly equal, if they do not excel, the best European porters.

In Kashmir there is nothing of this sort. A number of shikaris, in the course of many summers spent among the mountains in the pursuit of big game, have learnt how to move safely and quickly on steep ground, and to shepherd others less skilful than themselves, but their winters are spent frowsting in the valley crouched over their kangras, and they know nothing of the conditions that prevail at that time of year, nor of ice work, nor of the modern technique of difficult climbing. In addition, the average Kashmiri combines with a profound ignorance of snow conditions, an obstinate indifference to obvious dangers, and an acute sensibility to dangers that do not exist at all, except as the figments of his heated imagination, so that his company on a mountain is a responsibility that is not to be lightly undertaken.

The novice, therefore, will be in a completely different position to his confrères in Europe, who can, and in considerable numbers do, spend many seasons behind a guide without having to learn the most elementary principles of what, for want of a better term, is known as snow-craft. And his position potentially will be one of

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infinitely greater interest, provided he is prepared to make the necessary effort to study the problems with which he will be confronted from day to day, and not merely to rely on better informed companions when they are available.

The first and most important step for the beginner is the acquisition of a copy of "Alpine Ski-ing at all Heights and Seasons," by Arnold Lunn and published by Methuen. This book, in the space of a hundred pages, will supply him with the necessary background of theoretical knowledge, which he will rapidly be able to supplement by practical application. The notes that appear below apply primarily to Kashmir, but they are applicable also, with minor modifications, to the whole of the outer range of the Himalayas, and will give a fair working outline of snow and avalanche conditions among these mountains. They are not exhaustive and make no pretence of being a substitute for the above work, which, although it was written about conditions that are found in Europe, applies almost as well to the Himalayas, if the necessary allowances are made for the difference in latitude. Ski-ing in the Himalayas, however, has only become popular so recently that there yet remains much to be discovered regarding the conditions that prevail during the winter and spring, and some of the theories now advanced may be disproved in the future.

The immense mountain system which comprises the Himalayas consists of a number of more or less parallel ranges of varying height and length. The outer, or southernmost of these ranges, of which the Pir Panjal, in which most of the easily accessible Kashmir ski-ing grounds are situated, is not the least important, form the first considerable barrier to the rain-laden winds, which deposit a large percentage of their moisture upon

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them. The snowfall on these outer hills is therefore very heavy, and may amount to as much as eighteen or twenty feet at Gulmarg, which is considerably more than could be expected, for example, at St. Moritz or Mürren.

The next obstacle, which these damp winds encounter, is the Great Himalayan Range, in or near which lie, within the confines of Kashmir, Nanga Parbat, the Kamri and Burzil passes, Haramouk, Sonamarg, the Zoji La, Kolahoi and Nun Kun, with all of which the mountaineer on foot or skis may eventually make acquaintance. This range, too, receives a considerable snowfall, only slightly less than that of the Pir Panjal, but beyond it, in the Zaskar, Ladakh and Karakoram ranges, the snowfall is very much less and the climate approximates that of cold and dry Tibet. Consequently, the height at which snow lies throughout the year in these remote mountains is a good deal greater than in the outer and more accessible ranges.

The lowest limit of perpetual snow in the Pir Panjal would be at about 15,500 feet, though there are but few peaks at the western end of this range that attain to such a height. In the Great Himalayan Range the summer snow-line is at about 17,000 feet, and in the ranges that lie still further to the north at about 19,000 feet. At Leh, situated far beyond the Great Himalayan Range, at a height of 11,500 feet above the sea, snow lies only to the depth of a few inches, while at Srinagar, which is about five thousand feet lower, snow falls every winter and may lie three feet deep for many days on end.

One result of this enormous snowfall in the outer ranges, with which we are chiefly concerned, is that avalanches, far larger than those that ever occur in the Alps, are by no means uncommon. Owing to their enormous size and the terrific momentum which they generate,

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these avalanches can sweep over huge distances of comparatively level ground, on which a person with no experience of Himalayan conditions, and the scale on which nature works in this part of the world, might well suppose himself to be in perfect safety. Caution is therefore always necessary, particularly when choosing camping sites or sites for huts, and one-third of a mile of fairly level ground is not too much to allow between the site chosen and any large nullah, or long steep slope, down which a big avalanche might be expected to occur.

An idea of the size to which these avalanches attain may be obtained by studying the position of the Ski Club hut on Killanmarg, which was destroyed by an avalanche falling from Apharwat in the spring of 1930. This avalanche completely filled the deep nullah to the west of the hut and overflowed a large portion of the Lillywhite slopes, reaching nearly to their foot before it finally came to rest.

As it is of primary importance to avoid risks which are greater than any sport warrants, we will discuss the best means of keeping clear of avalanches first, and general snow conditions will be considered later.

b. Avalanches in General.

Avalanches constitute by far the greatest danger that ski-runners have to guard against. This is largely because the foot climber as a rule chooses a route along a ridge, on which the snow cannot lie in any quantity, and from which an avalanche, if it did start, would quickly be deflected. The skier, on the other hand, is more likely to choose a route that leads over the snowy face of a mountain, or down a nullah, both of which normally hold

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large quantities of snow, while the latter forms a natural funnel for falling avalanches.

Practically speaking, avalanches never occur on slopes that are less steep than twenty-five degrees, but a gentle slope, or even level ground, overhung by steeper slopes, may, of course, be overwhelmed by avalanches falling from above.

A slope with a concave face is less likely to avalanche than one that is convex. The reason for this is because the lower portion of a convex slope affords poor support for the snow lying above it, which therefore tends to slip away easily. Snow that lies immediately above a cliff, or a crevasse, has no support at all, and such places should always be treated with the greatest care, not only because they are very likely to avalanche, but also because, if they do, it is almost certain that anyone caught in such an avalanche would be carried by it over the edge.

The surface of the ground on which the snow lies is also of importance, more particularly early in the year, when the depth of snow is not very great. A smooth hill-side, slabs of rock, or long grass that has fallen flat, which is a common enough surface in some of the out-of-the-way parts of the Himalayas, where there are no large flocks to crop the grass closely, will allow the snow to slide off it very much more easily than a surface which is studded with boulders, or covered with scrub. This is a matter about which the winter visitor has usually to remain in ignorance for he has no opportunity of seeing the ground, over which he skis, bare of snow. Any chance that occurs of going over the ground during the summer should be seized. It is an experience which is of the greatest educational value. Not only from the point of view of gaining a knowledge of the places where avalanches are most likely to occur, but also because it makes one realise

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how gentle are the gradients that appear so forbidding in the winter, and how unimpressive are the places known by such profane names as "Oh God Gulley," which only the most dashing and the best of runners dare to take straight.

Avalanches, of course, vary enormously in size, from the stunning monster that devastates a valley, to an insignificant little snow-slide, which may be only a few inches deep and is harmless enough in ordinary circumstances. But, where the route leads above a steep drop, or a crevasse, it is necessary to be on guard against the smallest of them. Once our feet are swept away the damage is done, and it will be small consolation to be told by Saint Peter that the accident, which has brought us before him, was merely caused by a thin trickle of snow falling over the edge of a cliff.

A layer of newly fallen snow is often found lying upon older crusted snow. Such a surface is difficult to detect and is often extremely dangerous, as the new snow may only be lightly attached to the older snow beneath, from which it will slip away very easily. The possibility of such an underlying surface must always be borne in mind. It is in cases like this that a knowledge of what the weather has done for some weeks past is very valuable. Reliable information, however, is not easily obtained, as the inhabitants of the neighbouring valleys will either have no idea of what you are talking about, or else will think that there is a catch somewhere, and will assume that maddening and only too common attitude of mulish idiocy, which fits them like a garment.

Old tracks leading across a slope are by no means a sure sign that it is still safe, as conditions may have changed since they were made.

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c. Avalanches in Winter.

In winter, that is, in Kashmir, during December, January and February, provided the weather is clear, cold and settled, and provided there has been no fall of snow for at least two days, the danger from soft snow avalanches is small. As soon, however, as the general air temperature rises, or the air begins to feel damp or muggy, there is a very definite danger and no doubtful places should be ventured upon. Such days as these should be passed on the Nursery slopes, where a Slalom course can be laid out. Or in wood running, where the danger from avalanches is practically non-existent in any weather, provided the trees grow fairly thickly, and provided long open rides on steep ground are avoided.

Avalanches almost always occur soon after a heavy snowfall, particularly on hill-sides that face south. Consequently at least two days of settled weather must be allowed after a fall of more than a few inches before any long steep slopes can be trusted.

In the winter at Gulmarg no inexperienced party should venture above the Killanmarg hut, in doubtful conditions, except on the Lillywhite slopes, as all the nullahs, except, perhaps, Xmas Gulley, and also many of the faces between the spurs avalanche regularly every year.

Wind slab avalanches are of a different type, and are met with less often than powder snow avalanches, although, when they do occur, they are equally destructive. At moderate altitudes they occur only in the winter and early spring. The exact causes, which produce snow that forms this type of avalanche, are not yet fully understood, but the skier should remember that

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such avalanches are most likely to occur where there has been a snowfall accompanied by high wind and severe cold, or when newly fallen snow has been drifted by strong cold winds. Among the Himalayas in late spring the temperature rarely falls very low, and therefore this type of avalanche does not usually occur much after the beginning of April at moderate heights.

When snow falls while a high wind is blowing, it drifts until it finds a place sufficiently sheltered to allow it to settle. By the time that this wind-blown snow has found a resting place it has changed from a light, to a heavier, and slightly sticky powder. It is usually more or less caked and frequently forms into a hard crust. Thus the most likely places for wind slab avalanche conditions to be found are in the lee of ridges, or in sheltered amphitheatres. But, as a wind slab formed weeks before may still be dangerous, it is important to realise that the side of a ridge, which is usually exposed, may have been the leeward side in an earlier snow-storm coming from an unusual quarter.

Caky wind-blown snow will avalanche in much the same way as powder snow, but wind-blown snow that has formed into a hard crust is very deceptive, as it sometimes closely resembles sun-formed crust, which is always safe as long as it remains hard.

The ski-runner should always mistrust steep slopes of wind-blown snow, and must treat with the greatest caution any sheltered slope, or slope on the side of a mountain remote from the prevailing winds, that is covered with crusted snow, unless he can satisfy himself that the crust has been formed by the sun. Cornices point in the opposite direction to the prevailing wind and are thus a useful guide.

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Wind crust is usually easy to identify, but sometimes the distinguishing signs may be very slight. Its surface is nearly always patchy ; some parts of it will be harder than others, and here and there there may be a patch that is almost ice. Also, it is nearly always waved and rippled by the wind, though these ripples are sometimes so faint that they can scarcely be distinguished.

Sun-formed crust in mid-winter is only likely to occur at low altitudes and on slopes facing almost due south. It presents a surface that is quite uniform in texture. This does not necessarily mean that it is smooth, as ridges and hollows are frequently worn by the sun, and these may attain to the height of a foot or more between trough and crest later in the spring.

The soft snow underlying a wind slab usually settles somewhat in the course of time and leaves the brittle surface crust in a state of tension. The weight of the ski-runner cracks the crust and the whole slope breaks up into blocks, which, in extreme cases, may weigh anything up to half a ton, and which come tumbling down the mountain side with relentless force. It is needless to emphasise that anyone caught in such an avalanche would have a very poor chance of escape.

The top half of Xmas Gulley, which is the usual route up Apharwat from Gulmarg, is an ideal place for a wind slab avalanche and it should therefore be treated with great caution whenever wind-crusted snow is found in it.

Wind slab avalanches differ from soft snow avalanches because they can occur at any temperature, however cold, and after any length of settled weather. Skiers must therefore always be on their guard against them.

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d. Spring and Summer Avalanches.

In the spring avalanches of a different type occur, and, though probably more avalanches actually fall in the spring than in the winter, they are generally more easy to guard against. Summer avalanches closely resemble those that occur in the spring, but the danger in summer is not nearly so great, because there is much less snow, and because most of the places that are at all likely to avalanche have already done so. It must not be forgotten that spring and summer are not merely a question of date. Conditions at eight thousand feet at the end of March may be those of full spring, but at double this height winter conditions, *i.e.*, new powder snow, may occur in almost any month of the year.

From early spring onwards, the sun is so strong that snow, which has been exposed to it for more than a few hours, loses its powdery form, becomes wet and crystalline, and at night freezes into a hard solid crust. Crust formed by the sun, as long as it is hard, or only softened to the depth of a few inches, is almost invariably perfectly safe, but by about midday, or a good deal earlier, in the late spring, all snow that is exposed to the sun will have become a sodden mass, water-logged throughout its depth. Snow in this condition is extremely liable to avalanche, and, when it does so, owing to its compactness and great weight, forms avalanches of a very dangerous type. It becomes dangerously water-logged quite suddenly, so that a slope that was perfectly safe at ten in the morning may be in a very dangerous condition half-an-hour later.

This wet snow forms a most unpleasant ski-ing surface, and no one who knows his business is likely to be voluntarily abroad during these hot midday hours, unless in the course

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of a long climb. Lengthy expeditions must be carefully planned so that the dangerous hours are passed on gentle slopes, among woods, or in sleep.

In the early spring, before the snow has been exposed to the sun sufficiently long to have been melted throughout its depth, a layer of snow, consisting of the most recent snowfall, may become sodden and slip away from the older snow beneath it. This is a danger that is difficult to guard against and which is present also in the winter, when newly fallen powder snow is resting precariously on sun or wind-formed crust beneath.

In the spring steep slopes should be avoided when the sun is just leaving them as avalanches sometimes occur at this time. Such avalanches are probably due to a sudden expansion of the snow over the whole slope as the wet snow begins to freeze. In the Alps this is a well-known danger, but in the Himalayas at moderate heights the temperature does not drop so suddenly and such avalanches are believed to occur but rarely.

c. Cornices.

The ski-runner, no less than the climber on foot, must learn at an early stage in his career always to treat cornices with respect. It is, of course, one of the first rules of mountaineering that the edge of a cornice must not be approached too closely, and that, if the sun has been on it for some time, several yards should be left as a margin of safety, since cornices are usually much bigger, and project much further, than appears probable when seen from above. It is equally important to realise that it is dangerous to climb beneath a cornice during the hours of hot sunshine, for, if the cornice falls, it not only may

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be dangerous in itself, but it also frequently starts an avalanche.

In the Pir Panjal range the point is of some importance, as the whole crest of the Apharwat ridge is heavily corniced, and every year there are cornices of enormous size, many of which last until early summer, on every exposed ridge on the mountains rising above the Tosh Maidan.

f. Procedure in dangerous conditions.

If, in spite of your caution, you find yourself on ground that you mistrust, or with dangerous ground between you and home, which must be crossed to avoid being benighted, you should act as follows :—

1. If there is sufficient time, take off your skis, and, without traversing, walk in single file directly up or down the slope to the nearest safe place.
2. If it is necessary to cross the slope, walk in single file and in the leader's foot-prints, and choose a line as near the top of the slope as possible. The party should also spread out, and only one person at a time should cross the dangerous ground. This is a rule that should be invariably followed whenever there is the slightest danger of an avalanche occurring. If you are one of the last to cross, it is most necessary to curb your impatience and to wait until the person next ahead of you has reached a place of safety.
3. If you do not take off your skis, provided you can be sure that they will not get loose and slip away, it is as well to loosen the bindings

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before starting to cross dangerous ground, as, if you are caught in an avalanche, your chance of survival will be very much greater if you can free yourself from your skis.

4. If you are so unfortunate as to be caught in an avalanche, try to get rid of your skis and to keep your head, or at any rate a hand, above the surface of the snow. People with experience say that a swimming action with the arms is effective, and if you can remember to do so in the excitement of the moment, this should of course be tried.

An avalanche that has a clear run, and room in which to fan out as it falls, is much less likely to prove fatal than one which is squeezed within the limited confines of a gulley, or which runs up against the opposite side of a narrow valley. When either of these things occur the whole mass instantaneously freezes solid from pressure, and the chance of escape is small.

These remarks on avalanches may make rather sombre reading, but it is better to be safe than sorry, and although snow very frequently does not avalanche, when by all the rules it certainly should, the incautious or ignorant skier cannot expect to get away with it every time. One avalanche accident in a life-time is one too many, and it is far better to turn back if in doubt, even at the risk of being ridiculed by others more rash than yourself, and at the expense of missing what may, perhaps, promise to be the run of the season, than to get yourself, or, worse still, others, who have given you credit for better judgment than themselves, involved in a serious accident.

If you have never seen an avalanche, try to have enough imagination to realise that, in spite of it, they

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do actually occur, and will occur in the right circumstances, even if you yourself are in the way.

It is comforting to remember than even in Central Europe; where thousands of people ski every day during the winter and spring, the number of accidents due to avalanches is exceedingly small, and that, provided reasonable care is exercised, the danger is no greater than that incurred by a cautious man in crossing a busy street.

g. Winter Snow

In order to get the most enjoyable ski-ing and the best possible conditions, it is necessary to study carefully the types of snow that afford good running, and the conditions in which such kinds of snow occur, so that, after some practical experience, a reliable opinion can be formed in advance regarding where and when good snow is likely to be found. In winter this is not usually a very difficult matter, but, as soon as the returning sun begins to make its power felt, it calls for much thought and careful study.

In winter, which we defined earlier in this chapter as comprising, in Kashmir, the months of December, January and February (November is practically snowless except at great heights), snow, unless affected by sun, wind, or general thaw, falls, and will remain for an indefinite period in the form of a light powder. Immediately after a heavy fall the snow is usually rather soft and slow, but in the course of a day or two it settles somewhat and becomes really fast. This powder snow, which can occur at all elevations, is the best of all surfaces on which to ski, and, provided it is undisturbed, it will improve in quality the longer it lies. It is, however, very delicate in constitution and deteriorates in quality on the slightest provocation.

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Sun has the effect of crusting powder snow. During the day the heat of the sun partially melts the snow crystals lying on the surface, and at night this wet snow freezes into a hard crust, which has a fairly rough surface and which affords very fair ski-ing when it is thin, or has been slightly softened by the sun. But on steep slopes, when it is quite hard, it does not allow the skis to get sufficient grip and a turn often ends in an uncontrollable slither, which may result in the skier being carried over a drop before he can regain control.

During the winter in the Himalayas this sun-crust is usually found only on slopes that face almost due south, and at fairly low altitudes, but at Gulmarg the level rays of the early morning sun strike the hill-sides, which run steeply down towards Tangmarg, and which face almost due east, almost at right angles, and this causes them to crust badly after a few days of sunny weather. Slopes facing other points of the compass receive the rays of the sun at so oblique an angle that their effect on the snow is very slight, and days of bright sunshine will have little or no effect on the powder snow that lies upon them.

General thaw, or rain has much the same effect on powder snow as direct sun action, except that, instead of only affecting certain slopes, the effect is everywhere the same, and crust will form on all slopes as soon as the weather again turns cold enough to freeze the snow.

A far worse enemy of powder snow than either sun, or thaw, is wind. A few hours' strong wind is enough to ruin all powder snow that is exposed to it beyond hope of recovery, and in winter it is the exception rather than the rule to find snow that has not been somewhat spoilt by wind action at more than about fifteen hundred feet above the tree line (*i.e.*, about 12,000 feet above the sea).

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Powder snow, that has only been subjected to light winds, shows ripple marks on its surface, and in this condition it affords by no means bad ski-ing. The next stage in its deterioration is when it forms into cakes of sticky powder. This is a tricky surface on which to run and sometimes gives nasty falls when attempting to turn at high speed. Stronger or more prolonged wind transforms this cake powder into a crust, which varies from being a mildly unpleasant to an utterly damnable ski-ing surface.

Wind-crust is nearly always easily distinguishable from other sorts of crusted snow, because some patches of its surface are harder than the surrounding crust, and these may, in extreme cases, have turned into ice, while there will almost certainly be occasional pockets of soft and sticky snow. In its worst state the surface of the snow may have formed into waves a foot or more in height and ski-ing on such a surface is next door to impossible.

The variation in pace of wind-formed crust always makes ski-ing on it more or less unpleasant and trying to the temper.

The result of all this is that, as a general rule, the best ski-ing in the winter will be found on north and west faces at moderate altitudes, and among the woods, in which the snow, except on the rare occasions when the temperature has risen far above the normal, is always in good order, and which afford most interesting ski-ing. South slopes should not, however, be entirely neglected. At Gulmarg there are few slopes that face in this direction, so there the point is not of much importance, but it is as well to remember that for a few days after a fresh snowfall, or in settled weather when sun action has softened the crust, provided the danger from avalanches is not too great, south slopes will give just as good ski-ing as others.

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In winter the correct waxing of the running surface of skis is of considerable importance, and before a race no amount of attention can be too great, since well or indifferently waxed skis may easily make all the difference between winning and being beaten. In the spring wax is no longer necessary, as the snow is so hard that it would all be quickly scraped off, and snow that has once been melted and then refrozen never sticks.

The art of waxing has been greatly developed in recent years, and an expert on the subject could probably produce a work in three volumes on the finer points of the art, but for general purposes these intricacies can be ignored. For all ordinary work a hard, black wax, thinly and evenly spread, well ironed in and highly polished with a cork, provides an excellent finish when the snow is not sticky, but after a fall of new snow, or on warm days, when the snow is inclined to stick, a thin coating of ordinary white paraffin wax should be rubbed in on top of the black wax. This can be done at the top of the climb, as there is no need to iron it in and a brisk rub with a piece of cork is all that is necessary. It is the polish and not the wax that makes the skis fast.

h. Spring Snow.

As soon as winter conditions begin to give place to spring the problem confronting the ski-runner becomes vastly more complicated. In Kashmir there is period, which usually lasts only for a few days, while winter conditions are changing into those of spring, and during which it is difficult, except in the very early morning, to find any snow that will give good running. But, when spring conditions have definitely set in, first class ski-ing can once more be depended upon.

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After about the middle of March, the sun is so strong that all snow, that is exposed to it for more than a very short time, loses its powdery form and becomes crystalline. Further, the heat of the sun on the snow melts the surface crystals, the resulting water soaks into the snow beneath, and after a few hours the whole mass becomes saturated right down to the earth on which it rests. At night this wet snow freezes solid, with the result that at dawn all spring snow presents a hard frozen surface, which is just rough to allow skis to get a grip on gentle gradients, but which is awkward to negotiate and may be dangerous on steep ground.

The action of the sun in the Himalayas is so pronounced that, not only does the snow become wet and melted, but it is also eaten away into a series of ridges and hollows with roughly parallel axes and which may measure as much as a foot vertically between crest and trough. This kind of surface seems to be general on gentle slopes, and particularly on those facing west and north, but this is a point that needs to be verified by further observation before a statement can be made without fear of contradiction. In late spring these ridges and furrows become very much more prominent and extraordinary effects may frequently be seen. The ridges gradually increase in height and diminish in width, until the top few inches are as thin as the blade of a knife, after which they begin to disappear as the sun eats the crests away, so that the condition of a slope covered with snow of this type will sometimes vary very much from week to week. Such a surface gives quite amusing running for a short distance, but it is exceedingly tiring to the legs and ankles, and constant care is necessary when turning to see that the edges of the skis do not catch in the hollows.

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The hard snow that is to be found everywhere in the early morning is extremely fast, even when badly ridged, and quite gentle slopes will give really fast straight running. As the sun climbs higher and its power increases, the surface of the snow begins to melt, and, when it has only been superficially softened, it affords excellent running, only inferior to good powder snow. This superficially softened snow is known as telemark crust. It has an absolutely true surface, it is very fast, and it gives the skis just sufficient grip to allow any sort of turn to be easily made. Unfortunately, this delightful snow quickly deteriorates under the influence of the sun into a water-logged and sodden mass, which not only avalanches very easily, but is abominably slow and heavy in which to run.

The angle at which the rays of the early morning sun strike the snow is of great importance, as, if it approaches a right angle, the snow is softened far more quickly than if the angle is small. For example, the steep slopes by Lone Tree and Gadarene get soft almost as soon as the sun is up, while the almost level marg that lies between remains bone hard for a considerable time.

As the sun begins to sink in the evening and the hill-sides to fall into shadow, the snow starts to harden up again, until, soon after the sun has set, the snow-fields will be in the same hard frozen condition as we found them at dawn. In the evening, while the snow is hardening, there is a short period when the crust is not strong enough to bear the weight of a skier for more than a few yards, after which it breaks and lets him through to the soft snow beneath. This trap crust is vile to run on, particularly at the end of a long and tiring day, but it affords an excellent opportunity to practise jump turns.

Yet another type of snow that is commonly found in spring occurs chiefly on slopes that face north and

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PANDANPATHRI IN THE LATE SPRING. SUN-RIBBED SNOW IN THE MIDDLE DISTANCE.

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west, though the reason for this is not easy to determine. It is called film crust and consists of a thin film of transparent ice with more or less hard snow beneath. The sun does not seem to melt the over-lying ice, but it gradually softens and melts the snow beneath, so that there is frequently a gap of several inches between it and the film of ice on the surface. Film crust is a very fast surface, and, when it has been slightly softened, affords delightful ski-ing. The skis cut through the film ice to the softer snow beneath without effort, and the fragments of ice that are dislodged slip away down the hill-side with a pleasing rustling sound. Slopes that are covered film crust can be seen reflecting the sunlight from many miles away and form a distinctive feature of the Himalayan landscape in the early spring.

In spite of its changeable and varied character, spring snow has several great advantages. It is completely unaffected by wind, and, once it has been properly melted and refrozen, it never sticks. Also, tracks are quite obliterated in the course of a day or two of spring sunshine, and popular runs, that in winter are a mass of frozen ruts, or are beaten into a smooth and icy surface, are therefore just as good in spring as the most deserted snowfields. Waxing is not necessary, and indeed, is quite useless, as it would be scraped off in a very short while.

Further factors that must be considered in the spring are the orientation of the slopes down which the descent is to be made, the time of year, and the night that has gone before. Hill-sides that face east will soften earlier in the morning, and harden sooner in the evening, than similar ones facing west. The sun in May rises earlier, sets later, and is more powerful than it is in March, and a cloudy sky the previous night is a certain sign of a light frost, and, consequently, crust, that will not be so

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thick as usual, and which will soften more quickly, can safely be predicted.

The ski-runner must take all these factors into consideration and must balance one against the other when planning expeditions in the spring, so that to arrive at a correct solution entails considerable forethought and a large amount of practical experience. From these notes it will be evident that the early morning and the evening are the best, indeed the only times, in which it is possible to enjoy spring ski-ing; that of the two the morning is usually the better, and that the descent must be carefully timed so as to get hard, or only superficially softened snow on which to run.

It is necessary to emphasise that the sun in the Himalayas is so powerful that its effect on snow is very rapid, so that, if a late start has been made, no time is to be lost, and if it is not considered that there is likely to be sufficient time to reach the objective originally planned before the snow becomes too soft, it is far better to turn back, and enjoy a good, if somewhat shorter run than was originally intended, than to wallow homewards through slow and heavy slush. Nor will the forces of nature stand still for the enthusiastic amateur photographer.

i. Summer Snow.

By the beginning of June, the snow that remains at moderate heights has been melted and refrozen so often that it consists of quite large crystals, which never completely lose their form, even after hours of exposure to sunshine. This snow can be skied upon throughout the day, but by the early afternoon it gets very slow. It is never really good except in the morning before the

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sun has reached it, when, as it never gets really hard, because the summer nights are not cold enough to freeze it properly, it is just soft enough and rough enough to afford a fairly true and fast surface.

At this time of the year the sun's path is so high that the distinction between north and south is lost, but the difference between slopes that face east and those that face west becomes very marked, for the sun rises so early and sets so late that eastern facing slopes are only suitable for evening runs, and those that face west for the morning.

Usually the best conditions for the run down will be obtained by leaving the top about half an hour after sunset, when there will be just sufficient daylight left for the run home, provided the distance is not unusually great, or the party slow.

§ 6.

Gear for a light Ski-ing Camp in early Spring.

Tents. It will almost certainly be necessary to pitch the camp on snow and a tent with a sewn-in floor is therefore very desirable. Whymper tents, measuring seven feet by seven and with an outer fly, are very good for this type of work. They are very warm and light enough to be easily carried by one coolie, they can be pitched in a very short time and will stand any amount of rough weather. They can be bought from Messrs. Silver and Edgington, Ltd., Eastcheap, London. If it is not possible to get a tent of this, or some similar pattern, any ordinary double fly tent, that is not too heavy to be carried by one man (*i.e.*, about sixty pounds) will do, but it always will

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be necessary, after pitching it, to go to some trouble to make the tent draught-proof, either by weighting down the sides or by piling up snow on the outside to the height of a foot or more.

For the servants an ordinary shuldari, which can be bought cheaply, or hired for a few rupees a month in Srinagar, will suffice, provided there is no intention of making any very high or exposed camps. If such are contemplated, careful arrangements for the comfort of the servants will have to be made. Before pitching a tent the snow should be dug away to the depth of two or three feet and the tent pitched in the ensuing hollow. Such a camp is far warmer and will stand far more rough weather than one pitched on the surface of the snow. If the guy ropes are tied to a log buried in the snow they will be quite secure. Tent pegs are useless unless they are at least four feet long.

Bedding. Camp beds should not be taken. They make extra coolie loads and are cold to sleep on. It is far warmer and just as comfortable to sleep on the floor of the tent. Light rubber mats have been used with great success on some expeditions into the high Himalayas as a means of insulating the sleeper from the cold striking up from below. In a high camp they would undoubtedly be most useful, but, when camping anywhere near the tree line, they are not necessary, as a layer of small fir branches placed beneath the tent serves just as well, and in addition forms a beautiful springy mattress.

A sleeping bag is almost essential. It should be at least seven feet long and of some fairly light, though warm material. If it has a waterproof cover, so much the better, provided it is easily detachable. Zip fastening bags are very nice in theory, but, in practice, they are inclined to jamb if a piece of wool gets caught in the works,

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and, unless they are completely shut up, the slightest movement causes the zip fastening to open and admit icy draughts of air to the small of the back. Quite serviceable sheep-skin bags can be obtained in Srinagar at a moderate price, but, like almost all Kashmiri productions, they will not stand hard wear for more than a season or two. Several blankets and a pillow should also be taken and the whole lot should pack into a waterproof valise, which, with your spare clothes, will make one good coolie load. A feather-weight eider-down sleeping bag for bivouacs might prove extremely useful on long expeditions.

Lamps. Vapourised oil lamps give an excellent light, but they get out of order rather easily. Early to bed and early to rise must be the motto of the camp, and in these circumstances candle lanterns, which are obtainable for a rupee or two in Srinagar, are probably the best solution.

Servants. A good cook is a necessity. Choose one who has been on several long shooting expeditions to Ladakh or elsewhere. A man with such experience will know how to make the best of bad conditions and will be able to produce a decent meal even in a tearing snowstorm, when a cook, who has merely been on leisurely trips up the Sind valley, or to the Lolab, would be quite useless. Two or three permanent coolies will be necessary to cut wood, to carry skis, and to proceed to and fro between the camp and civilisation bringing supplies. It is much better not to take a private servant, as it is almost certain that, even if he is a hill-man, he will be out of his depth in such a camp, and he will quite certainly fail to get on well with the Kashmiri servants, with whom he may have to share a tent. If a personal servant is considered essential, a Kashmiri who has

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had previous experience of this sort of work should be engaged.

Each servant will have to be supplied with a blanket or two, gloves and dark glasses. All of these items can be obtained quite cheaply in Srinagar and it is not worth while importing them from outside. The cook will probably demand not less than thirty-five rupees a month and a certain amount extra as ration allowance, but, if he is a good man, he will earn his pay time and again. The coolies will have to be paid about a rupee a day each, and, if a little extra is given towards their food, the expense will probably be worth while for the added cheerfulness that will prevail in the camp. It is always worth taking a certain amount of trouble to see that the servants are contented and comfortable, as, if they are not reasonably treated, they are more than likely to behave unreasonably themselves, and, by leaving you in the lurch, spoil your trip, so that it pays even on purely selfish grounds.

Food. It is the worst form of economy even on the shortest trips to attempt to exist on poor, or badly cooked, or insufficient food. Ski-ing is done only for pleasure and cannot be enjoyed on an upset or empty stomach. It is far better to err on the side of extravagance than to commit yourself to false economy in this line. Tinned and preserved foods are usually tasteless and expensive, they are lacking in nourishment and become definitely nauseating if relied upon for more than a very short time. Every effort, therefore, should be made to arrange for a supply of fresh meat, or chickens, vegetables, eggs and, if possible, milk, all of which are quite easily obtainable from any of the more accessible of the ski-ing grounds that are described above, if a little forethought is given to the matter.

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Miscellaneous. A small oil stove would almost certainly be worth its weight, for, although there should be no difficulty in finding ample wood for an enormous camp fire, such a fire will rapidly sink below the surface as it melts the snow beneath, and after a few hours it may be as much as ten feet below the general level of the camp, when it will give but little warmth unless you sit immediately over it. An oil stove, round which to sit at meals, and with which to warm the sleeping tent for a short time before turning in, would be a great source of comfort.

Gilgit boots, which are made of thick felt and reach to the knee, can be bought in Srinagar for about ten rupees a pair and should certainly be included in your kit. They are well worth the price and are most useful for wearing in camp as they are draught-proof and warm to the feet. At night bed socks should not be despised.

A Roorkee chair for each person, and a light folding table off which to eat, are the only other items of camp furniture that are necessary. Both of these are virtually indispensable if the trip is to last more than two or three days, as anyone will admit, who has attempted to camp in comfort without them for any length of time. Indigestion always ensues if meals are eaten doubled up over some low makeshift table, or crouching on the floor.

A hot-water plate should certainly be provided for each person, as otherwise all hot food becomes tepid and unpleasant before it can be eaten. A tired appetite needs to be stimulated, and cold, unpalatable food cannot be faced at the end of a long day, with the result that after a short time the health of the party begins to deteriorate.

In addition to these major items, a shovel to dig away the snow, and a ski-repairing outfit, consisting of a hammer,

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a bradawl, a large screw-driver, pliers, a leather punch, thin brass or copper wire, screws, copper rivets and split pins should not be forgotten, nor should a few simple medicines and a liberal supply of face cream in case of sunburn be omitted.

Later in the year, when transport will be far easier to arrange and less expensive to employ, and when camping sites that are clear of snow can always be found without difficulty, more elaborate arrangements can be made. Ordinary eighty-pound, or Swiss cottage tents are then quite serviceable, though they are always draughty in a high wind. Other camping equipment, according to individual tastes and not differing very much from that required in the ordinary way, all of which can be hired in Srinagar, can be used.

§ 7.

Mountaineering.

For some reason mountaineering seems to have been rather neglected in Kashmir. A few of the residents have done a certain amount in their younger days, notably the Neve brothers, who made a number of ascents and who have to their credit the first conquest of Haramouk and Kolahoi. And those fortunate officers of the Survey of India, who have been stationed in Kashmir, have of necessity done a good deal of climbing in the course of their work. There have also been a number of expeditions to climb the grim giants of the remoter ranges, and attempts to unravel the secrets of the Karakorams have been made from time to time, but mountain climbing in the sense that it is understood in Europe is almost unknown.

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Perhaps the counter-attraction of big game shooting has been largely responsible for this, or perhaps it is due to the feeling that a seventeen thousand foot peak is hardly worth the effort, with Nanga Parbat towering nine thousand feet higher still and dominating the northern horizon. But, whatever the reason for this neglect, there is an enormous amount of virgin ground waiting for an enterprising climber, who, though unable to incur the great expenditure of time and money that is necessary in order to attack any of the real Himalayan giants with success, is content with more modest achievements.

In the second volume of the Himalayan Journal, Doctor Neve has indicated some of the climbs that can be made in the immediate neighbourhood of Sonamarg, but there are any number of others that a careful study of the map will suggest, and, when this district has been exhausted, there are others almost as accessible and no less prolific to be sought out.

The Pir Panjal range does not seem to offer much to the climber pure and simple. Few of the peaks present any great difficulties, except quite near the summit, and the rock of which most of them are composed is too rotten and crumbly to attract the rock climbing enthusiast. This range is really the paradise of the ski-runner, who, if he likes to end his climb on skis with a few hundred feet of not too exacting rock climbing, will here find ample opportunity of doing so.

Somewhat further afield there is a vast expanse of mountainous country, stretching from Nanga Parbat in the west, on which the famous English mountaineer Mummery, together with two Gurkha companions, was killed by an avalanche in 1895, and which has never yet been climbed, to Nun Kun and other lesser known mountains further east. Still further away are the remote

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giants of the Karakoram and Mustagh ranges. Of these only a few of the minor peaks have been conquered, though a number of attempts have been made upon them by Sir Martin Conway, H. R. H. the Duke of Spoleto, the Duke of the Abruzzi, Dr. and Mrs. Bullock Workman, Longstaff and others. Owing to their size and the great difficulty of access the Karakoram range presents few opportunities to the man of moderate means and limited leisure.

There is no climbing equipment to be bought in India and the mountaineer will have to arrange for everything he requires in the way of boots, ice-axes, Alpine rope and light tents for bivouacs to be sent out from Europe, unless he is a member of the Himalayan Club, which was formed some years ago, and which has a certain amount of gear that can be borrowed by members. There are local secretaries of this club, who are prepared to give information to members regarding facilities for climbing and travel in their districts, and the club also maintains at Simla a comprehensive library of Himalayan and general mountaineering literature, while the year-book, which it publishes, maintains a high level of excellence.

The climber in Kashmir, like the ski-runner, will have to rely entirely on his own efforts and experience, as there is no indigenous skill available. The inhabitants of the higher mountain valleys and some of the shikaris and coolies, who every year accompany Europeans on expeditions after big game, have good heads and are wonderfully sure-footed, but they cannot be trusted on really difficult rocks, and they have no knowledge of ice work nor of correctly handling a rope.

The natives of the further provinces, particularly Kishtwar and Baltistan, where, even to visit your next door neighbour, you have to be something of a mountaineer, are nearly as active as the wild goats that inhabit their

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country, and will go into the most hair-raising places without the slightest hesitation. They rely entirely on their great activity and fine sense of balance. They are usually safe enough, but their judgment of what can be done without taking undue risks is vitiated by their fatalistic attitude towards life and death, and cannot therefore be relied on. As they will usually follow where a white man, whom they trust, will lead, it is important not to let them down.

A Kashmiri is easier to handle in this respect, as he has a very good idea of what risks he is prepared to take, and the value that he sets upon his personal safety is surprisingly high.

The natives of the further Himalayas live too hard a life, and are too closely at grips with nature in the course of their ordinary every-day affairs, to have any inclination to explore her secrets among the higher ice-bound portions of the country they inhabit. And, as they people these high places with demons and spirits of the most malignant nature, a considerable amount of persuasion is generally necessary before they will consent to accompany even a modest expedition. Usually the only thing that will induce them to do so is the prospect of a liberal reward, which, in some of the remoter parts of the Himalayas, may have to be partly paid in kind.

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CHAPTER V.

SHOOTING AND FISHING.

General—The Valley—Ladakh—Baltistan—Astor—The Kaj-i-Nag and Shemshibri—Kishtwar—Other Shooting Grounds—Small Game Shooting—Fishing.

§ 1.

General.

KASHMIR has been famous for its big game, its countless wild fowl and its excellent fishing for many years past, and every season a large number of officers and civil servants, on leave from the plains of India, and a sprinkling of wealthy globe-trotters visit the country in search of sport. In the late fifties and sixties of the last century, when Kashmir first became popular as a summer resort, it was seldom necessary to go more than a short distance from Srinagar in order to obtain excellent and varied shooting. But the increased range and accuracy of sporting rifles, and the custom that then prevailed of assessing the prowess of a sportsman by the number of heads that he was able to bring back, even though the bag included females and immature males, soon resulted in the more accessible grounds being shot out. Visitors then began to go further and further afield, until, by the beginning of the present century, it seemed more than probable that, in a few years, almost all the game animals of Kashmir would be destroyed. Fortunately, the enforcement of regulations, which limited the number of animals that might be shot and the grounds open for sport, together

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with the growth of a convention that it is unsportsman-like to shoot female, or immature male horned game, saved them just in time.

The strict enforcement of these regulations for a number of years past has resulted in so large an increase in the numbers of almost all species, that to-day game is both numerous and widely distributed, and very fine heads are obtainable.

The increase in game has also undoubtedly been helped by the decline in the number of big game hunters that has occurred in recent years. This decline can be traced to various causes. The expense of a shooting trip has increased, fewer and shorter periods of leave are obtainable than in the past, and tennis and golf have greatly increased in popularity. The result is that there is now room for all, and the miserable and undignified race to be first on the ground, that used to be a feature of Kashmir shooting, is a thing of the past.

Arrangements for a shooting trip are easier to make in Kashmir than anywhere else in India, but the cost of such a trip is high in comparison with other less sophisticated parts of the Himalayas. And the novice can easily be committed to enormous unnecessary expense by the wiles of Kashmiri shop-keepers acting in collusion with his servants.

There are several agencies who are reliable and can make a good bundobast, but there are very few indeed who can be trusted to arrange a trip for the newcomer on economical lines. The hints given below may help the novice to buy experience fairly cheaply.

In those localities where the number of guns is limited, the season is divided into two parts : April to July and July to October. Each of these two periods has certain advantages and disadvantages.

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If the first part is chosen, marching to the shooting grounds is likely to be hard and rough. Paths and bridges will be in bad condition after the winter and snow will be lying deep on the passes. Transport is usually more expensive and a certain amount of cold and discomfort will be experienced. On the other hand, the snow on the mountains keeps the game fairly low. The areas that must be searched are therefore much reduced and the animals easier to find than later in the year.

In the second period marching will be easier, pony transport can be used to a much larger extent, shorter and more direct routes can frequently be followed, and the cold is unlikely to be severe. Game is more difficult to find, however, and the heat, particularly in such places as the Indus valley and on the road to Leh, is sometimes very trying. In the wet zone of the Himalayas, which includes Kishtwar and the Kaj-i-Nag, life in camp is generally unpleasant during July and August, and prolonged heavy rain makes marching practically impossible.

Applications for licenses should be made to the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, Srinagar, and lists of approved shikaris and other information can also be obtained from his office. Replies, however, are sometimes delayed and it is advisable therefore, to make all enquiries and applications well in advance. (See Appendix two.) Reserved blocks for the first period are allotted in order of application after arrival in Kashmir, but applications for the second period can be made from any place on or after the first of January, and are dealt with as they are received.

One of the most important factors in determining the success or failure of a shooting trip is the shikari. In Kashmir there are hundreds of men who call themselves shikaris, but the majority of them are worse than useless.

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A register is kept in the Game Office of the names of all the better ones, giving details of their experience, and no man should be considered for employment unless his name is on this list. A man who has had previous experience of the district in which you intend to shoot should be selected, as the shooting grounds are so vast that no one can be expected to have an intimate knowledge of them all. There are a few really excellent men, but those of average ability set off a number of good points with several grave failings. The large horde of unregistered men are useless impertinent loafers, dressed in impressive puttoo suits and large puggaries, and are even more mercenary than the ordinary Kashmiri.

The average shikari will be able to settle for his master most of the worrying details that arise from day to day. He will arrange for transport and obtain supplies from the villages passed en route (though he cannot be trusted to pay for them unless very carefully supervised), and will generally make himself useful on the march and in camp. He is likely to have pleasant manners and a fund of amusing reminiscences. He will know the way to most of the usual shooting grounds, but, when he arrives there, he will have to employ the local village shikari to point out the places where game is most likely to be found. He will be able to use field glasses and telescope competently, and will beat his employer every time when searching a hill-side for game. He will be a fair judge of a head and a moderately good stalker.

His chief failing is his amazing greed for money. Like all Indian servants, he will swindle you, and everyone he has to deal with, over every trifle. He will start to talk about the size of the tip he expects, and the amount the last sahib gave him, almost before the trip has started. When actually on the ground, he will not bother to search

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for the finest heads, if he thinks you will be put off with anything shootable that can be quickly and easily found. He will rarely get you close up to game, relying rather on the accuracy of your shooting than on careful and clever stalking, which, after all, is the essence of the sport. And in the excitement of the moment he is more than likely to upset you by continually muttering "maro, sahib" * as you are taking aim. If you miss an easy shot, or have to reprimand him, he will sulk like a spoilt child and talk of his "izzat." †

However, there is no question that anyone, who has not had considerable experience of India generally, and of shooting in the hills particularly, must take a shikari with him from Srinagar and must rely on him very largely to make arrangements, find game, and conduct the stalk when it has been found. This is the fundamental weakness of the sport, for any fool, who can shoot straight at two hundred yards, and has the money to hire a good shikari whom he is prepared to follow blindly, in time can kill every species of Himalayan game.

The real sport of hill shooting, or indeed of any sort of big game shooting, lies in running the whole shoot oneself. This, owing to lack of opportunity, is a chance that is open to few. A young man in the position to do so should make the most of it. During his first few years in the country he should gain experience on short trips accompanied by a shikari, after each of which he will be able to rely to an increasing extent on his own knowledge and experience. After a while he will know enough to be able to explore new ground, of which there is much that is passed over year by year, because no one has the initiative to go off the beaten track. He will gradually come to rely for his information on villagers, who live on the

* "Shoot, Sir." † "Honour."

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spot, and he will be his own stalker. In the course of his apprenticeship he will make innumerable mistakes and may sometimes come back with little to shew in the shape of a bag. But he will have a hundred times more real sport than the man who brings in the limit number of every species on his license, but who has to thank his shikari for the whole of his success.

Two servants and a permanent coolie, to carry the camera, lunch and so on, are all that is necessary (see page 114.) The shikari will be certain to have his own friends, who will want to come as servants, and on the whole it is better to let him bring them. They will combine to rob you, but they will, at least, get on together.

In no circumstances be persuaded to take a second shikari with you, though your shikari will certainly insist in the most passionate terms that such a man is indispensable. A second shikari is quite unnecessary and is generally merely a youngster out to learn the job.

Give each of the servants a few rupees to buy a blanket and coat, and supply them also with a pair of chaplies, or, if grass sandals are going to be worn, with a couple of pairs of felt socks. They will also each need a pair of cheap, dark goggles, for use when crossing snow-fields, and woollen gloves, both of which should be bought in Srinagar. The shikari and cook will have to be paid thirty to thirty-five rupees a month and the other two about twenty. Each man must also be given a small monthly allowance for food in addition to his pay.

One might suppose that, having fed, clothed and paid good wages to these men, a moderate tip at the end would be considered adequate. But it is not so. Largely owing to the action of a few people with more money than sense, who are foolish enough to take the Kashmiri at his own valuation, the tipping business has become a

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scandal. There is a case on record of a fellow, who, after a two months' trip to Ladakh, handed his shikari a cheque for a hundred pounds, which is the equivalent of about thirty-six months' pay and more than any shikari could earn in five years. With people such as this about it is scarcely surprising that the market has been spoilt.

It is not a bad idea, if you have sufficient confidence in your shooting, to tip according to results ; so much for each ibex over forty-two inches, and so on. Otherwise, at the end of a two months' trip, if your man has done you well, give him twenty-five to thirty rupees, and each of the others half-a-month's pay. They will look at it as if it was dirt, in that infuriating way that Indian servants have, and, when that fails, they will clamour round for more. Explain that you refuse to give them more, not because you are mean, but because you do not consider them worth it. Then, to satisfy them that you are not mean, take a ten-rupee note, light a match, and burn it before their eyes. Mark their expressions of horrified wonder as the ashes fall ; it is worth far more than ten rupees.

The expense of a shooting trip need not be great, though the days when two hundred rupees a month would cover everything are long past. Excluding the cost of the journey to and from Kashmir and the cost of a license, four hundred to four hundred and fifty rupees a month should be ample. But if a large amount of gear is taken, or if a close watch is not kept on the agent and servants, this amount may be largely exceeded. After some experience it should be possible to reduce expenses considerably.

The question of stores and equipment for trekking has been dealt with in chapter three, and most of the things mentioned there will be necessary also on a shooting trip. Below is a list of additional items that will be required.

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Skinning knives and preservative for skins. (See also page 200.)

About a hundred three-inch nails for pegging out skins.

Cleaning things for rifle and shot gun. After firing, rifle barrels should always be cleaned by pouring boiling water through them. Then dry and oil them. A rifle barrel can be ruined in no time if it is neglected, as the chemical action set up by modern explosives is very strong. There are several good anti-fouling pastes on the market, which will keep barrels from corroding and should be used before putting a rifle aside for some time. Before using, remove all the oil, etc., from inside the barrel by pulling it through with a dry rag.

A khud stick. These can be bought for a small sum in Srinagar. They have a chisel-shaped iron point with which quite effective steps can be cut in hard snow.

Maps as necessary.

A primus stove, or Tommy's cooker is often useful.

A small, very light tent, for an odd night or two when it is necessary to go far afield and travel light, may be very useful, but it is hardly an essential.

Clothes should be warm and loose fitting and of some inconspicuous colour. A browny-grey coat, with plus fours of a slightly different shade, harmonize with the background on a hill-side better than a complete suit of the same stuff. A solar topee is necessary, but, unless one of a grey Curzon pattern is worn, or one that is really old and weather-beaten, it forms a very conspicuous object on a hill-side. The usual type of pig-sticker is enough to scare any game within a mile. A pair or two of khaki shorts should be included in your kit as they are far the coolest things to march in.

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Boots are a matter of taste. Really good London-made shooting boots cannot be beaten, but chaplies are cooler and quite comfortable, except when gravel gets between the sole and the leather sock. Kashmir grass sandals and felt socks are excellent on snow, or shale, and one's feet never seem to get cold in them.

A pair of good field glasses and a telescope are essential. X8 is the best magnification for field glasses, but it is essential to get them from a really reputable firm. A spare pair for your shikari will be found very useful. The telescope should, if possible, be light and should give a magnification of thirty, or thereabouts. Without good glasses the business of finding game is rendered far more difficult, and without a powerful telescope it is not possible to estimate the size of heads at a distance, and it will often be necessary to waste time stalking animals that turn out to be not worth shooting when you get near.

Before making a long trip a visit to a dentist is a wise precaution. The cold winds of Ladakh soon find out any weakness and prolonged toothache will ruin the pleasure of any trip. Smallpox and enteric fever are endemic in the Himalayas and it is therefore advisable to be vaccinated and inoculated before starting. While away from civilization it is essential to take proper care of the least illness. A slight chill, if neglected, may turn into something serious, and the most insignificant cut or insect bite may give endless trouble if it turns septic. In addition, it is impossible to work hard, or shoot straight, if you are not fit, so on the first sign of illness take a day or so off in camp and get rid of it. Do not forget something to put on sun-burn.

It is most unwise to start off too violently. Unless you are perfectly fit when you leave Srinagar, take the first few marches easily and so gradually harden up your

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muscles ; on the return journey you will be able to march in a way that will surprise you. It is a mistake to plan a trip with too large a proportion of marching to shooting. When planning a trip from an armchair it is so easy to forget what ten marches more or less really imply. Allow ample time, so that you can take a day off when you feel like it, and, if you come to a place that attracts you, you can stay and see more of it. After all, shooting trips are only made for pleasure, and it is far better to march a short distance and enjoy it, even if you get nothing better than an odd bear or two, than to dash by double marches to the furthest parts of Ladakh for an ammon, and never have time to appreciate the country through which you pass.

A hobby such as butterfly, or plant collecting will add enormously to the enjoyment of a trip. There are still large gaps to be filled in our knowledge of these branches of the natural history of the Himalayas, and your efforts may, perhaps, result in the discovery of something new, or even in some obscure insect being christened with the Latin version of your surname.

In camp, and on the hill-side when waiting for game to move, there will be many hours that would pass slowly without a book to read, so take a small selection in India paper editions of authors who require slow and careful reading. Some people maintain that Bradshaw or Whitaker's Almanac give the best value for weight.

It is difficult to say whether a shot-gun is worth taking or not. In Ladakh, and perhaps Kishtwar, it might be worth its weight, but a ·22 rifle would be more generally useful for shooting for the pot. A ·22 rifle has the advantage of being quieter than a shot-gun and of using small and light ammunition.

The rifle is obviously of vital importance, but it is surprising how many people set off without testing their

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weapon for accuracy. The chances of a shot at any of the rarer, or more difficult Himalayan game occur at long intervals, and it is therefore essential to know your rifle well enough not to bungle the chance when it does come. If your rifle is new, try it out before you start and occasionally on the march also, until you can use it automatically and without having to think about mechanical details.

With modern high velocity rifles the trajectory is so low that the art of judging distances is not so important as it was years ago. However, continual practice is still essential. Your shikari will usually be a fairly good judge, but distances, particularly across a deep drop, are very deceptive in the Himalayas. The general tendency is to over-estimate by twenty to thirty per cent.

If you have to buy a rifle, and the price is of importance, get a second-hand one by a good maker rather than a cheap new one. It is, however, essential to get a second-hand one tested for accuracy at a range by an expert before buying it. Double-barrelled hammerless rifles are the best, but they are very expensive, and a good magazine rifle, though the action is noisy, is perfectly serviceable. The chief disadvantages of a single-barrelled rifle are that most people find a snap shot much more difficult, and you cannot get off a second shot so quickly as with a double-barrelled one.

The weight of the rifle is of small importance. Your shikari will carry it until the closing stage of the stalk, so do not be induced to buy a rifle with a very small bore on the ground of lightness. Other things being equal, a large bore, say ·375, is far better than one with a bore of less than ·300. The stopping power of a large bore rifle, as a general rule, is greater than that of a small bore, particularly if the animal has not been hit in a vital place. Also,

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if an animal wounded with a large bore rifle has to be followed, there are generally traces of blood, whereas a wound from a high velocity small bore rifle frequently leaves no trace of blood.

The foresight should be as fine as possible, and the back-sight a wide V, set at an angle towards the butt so as to throw the V into relief. Some people like a peep-sight and they certainly have advantages, but they need a large amount of practice. In a bolt-action rifle the peep-sight is usually fitted to the head of the bolt, and care must be taken that not only the sight itself, but also the bolt head is perfectly rigid. If there is the slightest play, a large error will ensue.

Telescopic sights are delicate affairs, but almost essential to anyone whose sight is at all defective. They, too, require considerable practice, for the slightest unsteadiness in holding the rifle appears greatly magnified. Telescopic sights are easily damaged and should be treated with the greatest care as a slight knock may put them out of adjustment.

A sling is necessary, but one without metal fittings should be used, otherwise the swivels are sure to clink against the barrel just when a noise is fatal. A spare rifle in case of accident should certainly be taken, if possible.

All firearms should be carried in strong wooden, or leather cases. Otherwise they are liable to be damaged when on the march.

Take plenty of ammunition. It is unlikely that you will require much, but it is better to have too much than too little. Carry it in air-tight tins and get a certificate from the supplier that it is freshly imported. Never take less than fifteen rounds with you when leaving camp as you may have to fire a number of shots at

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a wounded animal that you are unable to approach closely.

Major Gerald Burrard's book, "Notes on Sporting Rifles," is an excellent guide to anyone thinking of buying a new or second-hand rifle and it contains much other useful information as well.

Half the art of successfully hunting hill game lies in carefully searching the ground, with the help of field glasses and telescope, in order to find the game before it discovers you, and time spent in this way is rarely wasted. To search an enormous expanse of hill-side minutely and reasonably quickly is a matter that requires much practice, and time and again your shikari will surprise you by discovering game in the very places that you have just searched yourself. There are two reasons for his superiority. The first is that he knows what to look for. He has the turn of an ibex's horn, or the outline of a burrhel, fixed subconsciously in his mind, and so is able to pick them out, when they are, as it were, only half visible. And the other reason is that he searches each small section of the ground systematically and thoroughly, and does not move his glasses till he is sure that each section is blank.

The eyesight of hillmen is proverbial. They will see things easily with the naked eye that a white man can barely distinguish through powerful glasses, and, though a Kashmiri shikari is usually capable of using both glasses and telescope well, a native of the further Himalayas is generally better without them.

Watching animals through powerful glasses is most fascinating and impresses one strongly that animal photography must be a far finer sport than shooting. Some marvellous photographs of tigers and other game animals of the plains have been taken in recent years, but up to date there have been hardly any successful photographs of

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Himalayan animals. The difficulties appear terrific, but difficulties almost as great have been overcome in other forms of photography, and everyone must admit that to stalk and photograph an animal is far more difficult, and at least as satisfying, as to shoot it.

Many professional shikaris do not explain beforehand what they intend to do during a stalk. Following a shikari blindly is exceedingly uninteresting, and with such a man you can shoot for years and never learn a thing. Make your shikari explain his plan and the difficulties he anticipates before starting. You will soon learn enough to make intelligent criticisms and perhaps occasionally to improve upon the original idea.

In stalking there are three chief things to be considered; the animal's powers of scenting, hearing and, of course, seeing. Of the three, noise is generally the easiest to guard against. The sound of displaced stones or gravel, unless very loud or frequent, does not excite much alarm. Hill animals hear such noises occurring continually from natural causes. But the sound of the human voice, or, for example, the chink of metal against stone alarms them immediately. Animals have exceedingly keen ears and can hear slight sounds at a distance that appears hardly possible.

With the exception of the bears, the sight of Himalayan animals is extraordinarily good, but, unless you move, they cannot usually see you at great distances, provided your clothing and outline merges into the background. Avoid showing yourself on the sky-line, and remember that, when in sight of game, a hand moved to flick at a fly is just as likely to be fatal as if you had got up and shouted. If you almost stumble across an unexpected animal, a common occurrence when stalking a scattered herd, "freeze" solid at once. You may

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have to crouch immovable in a cramped position for from ten to twenty minutes before the animal that saw you is satisfied that it was mistaken. During this time the slightest hint of a movement will ruin the stalk.

The question of scent is perhaps the most baffling of all. During settled weather the breeze blows down-hill from an hour or so before dusk, until some time after the sun has risen, and uphill during the day. But in mountainous country, owing to side currents that have been diverted by outlying spurs, the breeze is continually deflected, and may blow intermittently many points off its proper course and shift several times in the space of an hour. In cloudy or stormy weather the wind shifts continually, and stalking becomes almost impossible. In such weather you are far more likely to disturb game than to get a shot, and it is, therefore, as a rule better to stay in camp until the weather again becomes settled.

Further pitfalls awaiting the inexperienced stalker are the difficulty of keeping direction when moving in dead ground, and of estimating the time that a stalk is likely to take. The appearance of a hill changes very rapidly as you move across it, and, in order to keep direction, it is essential to have a series of points that must be passed firmly fixed in one's mind's eye. And it is obviously useless to start on a two-hour stalk when there is only half that amount of daylight left. Distance among these great mountains in so deceptive, however, that an inexperienced person may easily set out for a point, that appears no more than an hour away, when actually it will take the best part of a hard day's journey to reach it.

As a rule it is not advisable to try to get much nearer to an animal than a 150 yards. Kashmiri shikaris, however, will very often try and get you to shoot at 250 to 300 yards, when, with a little extra care and patience, you would be

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able to get considerably nearer. After all, ninety per cent. of the fun is in the last part of the stalk, and, if you wish to be taken as a sportsman, rather than as a collector of trophies, you will always try to get as close as you can, within reason, and never fire unless you are morally certain that you will kill clean with your first shot.

For some reason, shots at a wounded animal do not seem to have much effect, unless they hit it in an absolutely vital spot, and there is nothing more revolting than having to follow up some wretched wounded beast and fire several more shots to put it out of its misery. Kinloch, who probably had as much experience of hunting Himalayan game as any man, wrote that the way to make a good bag is to get near game and seldom to fire a doubtful shot. And, though he was talking of days when rifles were by no means as accurate as they are to-day, his advice is still as good as ever it was.

Before taking the shot, if the game is still undisturbed, rest for a moment or two to gain your breath and steady your hand, then rest your rifle on something soft, *e.g.*, a rolled up handkerchief, and aim through the animal's shoulder. Most wounded animals are hit too far back. Such animals eventually succumb, but, before doing so, they probably get away to some inaccessible crag and die a lingering death. The reason why so many animals are hit too far back is because aim is taken at the animal as a whole. At moderately long ranges the finest foresight will cover a considerable portion of an animal the size of an ibex. It is therefore essential to have a foresight as fine as possible and to aim so that the centre of the bead covers the forepart of the animal's shoulder.

It is a good rule never to shoot an animal of a species that you have already shot unless you suppose its horns to be larger than the ones you already possess.

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Do not be disappointed if you do not find large heads at once. Search all the ground open to you carefully, and, if you come home after three months with as many really good heads, you will have done better than the average.

When the stalk and shot have been successfully completed, measure the head. Horns are measured from base to tip along a fair curve, and without pressing the tape in between any irregularities in the surface, such as those that occur on the front edge of an ibex's horn. Markhor's horns are measured from behind along the keel.

If you wish to keep the skin, or have the mask set up, supervise the skinning carefully.

Kashmir shikaris can take a skin off fairly well, provided they are watched, but they cannot be trusted to do the more difficult parts round the eyes, lips and ears properly, so it is advisable to do these bits yourself. Your first attempts at skinning will naturally be slow and clumsy, so, before starting on your first trip, it is always worth while to practise beforehand. It is a distasteful business, which requires a certain amount of courage to embark upon in cold blood, but it is a good investment in the long run. Rowland Ward's "Sportsman's Handbook" will tell you all that is necessary about skinning and preserving in the space of a few pages. A very sharp knife is quite essential, and, in order to keep it properly sharp while skinning, it will be necessary to re-set the edge on an oil-stone every now and again. You should therefore take with you two or three small knives, one stronger one for coarse work, and a small oilstone.

After the skin has been taken off, it is essential to remove every trace of flesh, fat and blood, and, when this has been done, to rub in a quantity of burnt alum. Cold wood ashes make a very good substitute. The thinner

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parts, such as the lips, should be painted with arsenical soap, as alum tends to make them too dry and brittle.

Do not boil a skull, if you want to mount it without the mask, as this discolours it. It should be cleaned gradually by soaking it for some days in water, or, better still, by leaving it in an ant's nest.

Finally, having gone to all the trouble and expense of a shoot, do not have your trophies mounted by a native taxidermist. There are one or two firms in Srinagar, who are very persuasive, and who exhibit quite attractive show specimens of their work. Their prices are far below London rates, but in no circumstances be persuaded to patronise them. After two or three months of close association with Kashmiris, you should be able to imagine some of the innumerable ways in which they may cheat you over such work.

In a small house, rows of stuffed heads are rather overwhelming, so, unless yours is one of the more stately homes, have only the two or three best heads stuffed and the horns and skull of the remainder fixed to small plain shields.

§ 2.

The Valley.

Big game shooting in the valley is now entirely confined to black bear, Kashmir stag, serow and leopard. The occasional ibex and red bear, which may still be met with in the nullahs towards the head of the Sind and Liddar valleys, have been carefully preserved for a number of years past. Musk deer, though fairly common in places, can only be shot by the holders of a special license and, owing to their confiding habits, do not afford much sport.

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a. Black Bear.

Kashmiri name : Harpat.

Probably eighty per cent of visitors to Kashmir, who shoot at all, make their first acquaintance with big game through the black Himalayan bear, the Harpat of the Kashmiris. But, though bear shooting can be exciting enough, a little of the sport goes a long way, particularly if other sorts of Himalayan game, which require stalking, have been hunted before.

Black bears are still numerous in Kashmir, though nothing like so common as they used to be fifty or sixty years ago, when very large bags were sometimes made by the blood-thirsty sportsmen of those days. It is on record that in 1871 four officers of one regiment took eighty skins away with them, of which one of them had shot half.

The best means of shooting black bear varies according to the time of year. They rarely go above the tree line and they do not hibernate completely, so that a mild spell even in mid-winter may bring them out in search of food. In early spring, black bears chiefly feed on the lush new grass that appears in the clearings among the forests close on the heels of the melting snow ; later, on young apricots ; in June and early July, on the mulberry crop, which is then ripe ; in August, on the Indian-corn ; and, as autumn draws on, they raid the apple and walnut trees. Occasionally they turn into cattle killers, and exhibit the most revolting cruelty by beginning to feed off the animal they have overpowered before it is dead, while villagers, who come upon them unawares, are frequently badly injured and sometimes killed. Their bad temper is not difficult

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to explain, as almost all mature black bears, living in fairly accessible places, must in their time have been fired at and perhaps wounded.

Good bear ground can be found within a short distance of Srinagar, and a shoot is therefore cheap and easy to arrange, even for people with only a few days at their disposal. But care should be exercised in choosing a shikari, as some of the worst of the breed hang about Srinagar offering to show unsuspecting beginners magnificent sport.

The shikari will be certain to suggest a beat, or "hank," and, provided the man knows his job and can control the beaters, and the lying-up place of the animal is known fairly accurately, this is the most likely way of obtaining a shot. If the beat is mismanaged, the whole affair is a waste of time and money. At its best this method gives a good sight of the animal and some excitement, but it calls for no skill or initiative on the part of the sportsman, other than shooting straight, unless he manages the beat himself. A more interesting and sporting method is to visit the grassy glades, or orchards, or fields of corn, according to the season of the year, in the early dawn and again at dusk, and to attempt to stalk a bear while it is feeding. They have good sight and excellent noses, so it is necessary to work carefully up-wind and keep out of their sight.

Always aim low at a bear, to allow for the shaggy mass of hair on its shoulders and back. Remember that a wounded or angry bear is sometimes very dangerous and therefore do not let familiarity breed contempt. Sitting up at night for bears is no longer permitted. A good sized black bear will measure about six feet over all

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b. Leopard.

There are a considerable number of leopards in the valley and the surrounding hills, some of which grow to a very large size, but they are not commonly shot. Occasionally they appear when beating for bears, but they are more often obtained by sitting up over a live bait. Shooting by night is not now permitted in Kashmir and this largely prevents sitting up from being successful.

c. Serow.

Kashmiri name : Ramu.

The chance of shooting a serow in Kashmir is not very great, for, although they are by no means rare, their retiring and solitary habits, and the thickly wooded nullahs in which they live, make them very difficult to locate. They are curious animals, stockily built, with a dark shaggy coat, turning to red towards the belly, which is a dirty white. They have large ears and a prominent mane. Serow are widely distributed throughout the southern side of the Himalayas and the suitable parts of Assam and Burmah. In Kashmir they do not seem to carry quite such large heads as in some other districts, but the point is not of much importance as the record head measures only about 10½ inches. The horns, which are carried by both males and females, are handsomely polished, ringed for a short distance from the base, and then smooth and sharply pointed. They inhabit steep and rocky ground in thickly wooded nullahs at about seven to eight thousand feet above sea level, and, even in severe winters, they do not seem to descend much lower.

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It is said that beating is sometimes successful, but it is advisable only to use this method as a last resource, for even if it fails, the animal is sure to have been disturbed, which renders the chance of a subsequent shot unlikely. Wounded serows have been known to charge when brought to bay and inflict serious damage with their horns. Sometimes when wounded or alarmed they utter a loud braying scream.

The best means of obtaining a shot at a serow is to find a vantage point in a nullah, that is known to contain one, and to attempt to spot it as it comes out to feed in the early morning or evening, when it can be stalked. The early spring is best, as the undergrowth is then thin, and the animals can be seen among it far more easily than later in the year.

d. Musk Deer.

Kashmiri name : Roos.

This curious little animal is widely, though sparingly, distributed in Kashmir, wherever wooded hills, particularly birch forests, are to be found at elevations of not less than about eight thousand feet above the sea. Although it is preserved, and may not be shot except with a special license costing forty rupees, it is nowhere very numerous, as it is subject to continual persecution by poachers. It stands about 24 inches high, has large prominent ears, and the bucks carry two long upper eye teeth, which project downwards for an inch or two below their lips. Their forelegs are somewhat shorter than the back and this gives them a rather odd jerky action. They always remain at a considerable height, and even in snowy winters they do not seem to suffer, as their

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thick coat of pithy and very brittle hair insulates them from the cold.

The pod of musk, for which they are so persecuted, is situated close to the navel and is only carried by the males. The musk, of which there is usually about an ounce, is used as a basis for many kinds of perfume, and Indians will pay a considerable sum for it, so, if you shoot one, see that it is not stolen.

They are usually either solitary or in pairs and come out to feed in the mornings and evenings.

They are not difficult animals to shoot, as they are by no means shy, and, if disturbed, move slowly off with frequent pauses. The flesh is excellent.

e. The Kashmir Stag.

(The Kashmiri name is Hangul; Europeans frequently, though erroneously, refer to it as the Barasingh, and Kashmiris use this name when talking to Europeans.)

This fine animal, which stands as much as fifty inches at the shoulder, affords by far the best sport that the valley has to offer. In the summer, which the hangul spends on remote hill-sides far above the forests, its general colour is brown, but in winter its coat becomes much darker and greyer. It carries a very fine head, similar to, but generally much larger than the Red Deer of Scotland. As a rule the antlers carry the brow, bez and trez tines with two on top, but twelve pointers are quite common, and heads with as many as sixteen and as few as eight points have been recorded. The beam is frequently much curved inwards and the brow tine takes off some distance

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above the burr, in both of which points the antlers differ from those of the Red Deer. The antlers are shed towards the end of March.

Stags which carry antlers of less than thirty-five inches may not be shot. The record head is well over fifty inches, and anything over forty-three is really good. However, in judging the antlers of a Kashmir stag, or indeed of any other stag, length is not everything. Weight, symmetry and grace all should be considered, and some of the most perfect heads cannot compare in length with others that are nothing like so fine.

The season for stag shooting opens on September 15th and closes on March 14th. The opening of the season usually finds a number of sportsmen in the valley, and, as the only way to reserve a nullah is to be there first, it is advisable to arrive in the nullah of your choice two or three days before the season opens.

At this time of year, the stags are travelling from their summer resorts in the direction of Gurais and Tilel, through the Erin nullah and the Sind and Liddar valleys, until they reach Kishtwar, and even the borders of the Chamba state. They are to be found high up the hill-side, where the forest begins to thin out, and their presence is often betrayed by the tracks they leave in the first light falls of snow. Very soon after the shooting opens the rutting season starts and the stags begin to call. This is of course an immense help in locating them. Also, being love-sick and restless, they move about a great deal, and seem to lose a certain amount of their natural wariness. Some shikaris maintain that during the rutting season they can bring them up within rifle shot by imitating their call.

In order to hunt them successfully in the early autumn it is necessary to be up before the first hint of

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daylight and to climb from the camp to a vantage point well above the highest trees, from which, if a stag is sighted, a stalk in the open may be possible. During the middle of the day, the stags retire into the forests and do not come out again until the evening. It is difficult and chancy work finding them during the day, when they are among the woods, but it is well worth trying. As evening falls they again appear in the open and a stalk in the last of the light may be obtained.

This autumn shooting is perfectly delightful. The days are sunny and cool, the scenery is marvellous and the hill-sides are rich with the russet browns of autumn.

After the calling season is over, there is a period, lasting for a month or two, when the stags are hard to find. Snow has generally fallen to the level of the trees and the animals are therefore forced to remain among the woods, in which the undergrowth is still thick. But, when winter has fully set in and the whole country is deep in snow, they are forced to descend almost to the level of the valley. They are then easily found and can be shot without much difficulty, but the sport cannot be compared with that obtainable in the earlier part of the season. Driving occasionally meets with success, but it is poor sport and the best stags seem almost invariably to break back.

A Kashmir stag is large and powerful, and nothing but an accurately placed shot will stop him. Kashmir shikaris cannot track with any skill and a wounded animal is therefore more than likely to escape and die by inches. Stags are too fine and beautiful animals to treat in this way, so, unless you are reasonably certain of killing with your first shot, be a sportsman and wait for a better chance.

Numbers of hangul, chiefly does, are poached by the natives, particularly after heavy falls of snow, but, on the

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whole, no animal has benefited more from the enforcement of the game laws. Twenty-five years ago they were in grave danger of becoming extinct, but nowadays they are numerous and fine heads are obtained every season.

§ 3

Ladakh.

(For Ladakh shooting regulations, see Appendix two.)

A large variety of game animals occur in this district of Kashmir and it has been among the most popular of Himalayan shooting grounds for many years past. The strict enforcement of the Kashmir game laws has, however, prevented any noticeable diminution in the head of game during recent years, and some species are probably as numerous as ever they were.

The season in Ladakh is divided into two periods and there is a limit of twelve guns in each period. Of these, eight may be allotted an ammon block and a sharpu block, of which three may shoot in the Chang Chenmo district. There are two extra sharpu blocks available for the remaining guns, who, of course, may also shoot in those areas that are not reserved as blocks. (See map facing page 210.)

Ladakh is a fascinating country and there are far more interesting things to be seen in the intervals of shooting and when on the march than in any other of the Himalayan shooting grounds. The marching is for the most part fairly easy; pony, jho, or yak transport can be used almost everywhere; and it is certainly the most suitable of the further districts for ladies either to shoot in, or in which to accompany their husbands. The climate, however, is severe,

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and extremes of heat and bitterly cold winds are likely to be experienced in quick succession, particularly in the remoter and higher portions of the ammon country and in Chang Chenmo.

During the first period, some difficulty will probably be experienced in crossing the Zoji La, while the Khardung La and Chang La, beyond Leh, which lead over the main Ladakh range to the valleys of the Shyok and Nubra rivers and to Chang Chenmo, are not likely to be open much before the middle of June. Later in the year none of the passes should give much difficulty, but the heat and glare are sometimes very trying between Kargil and Leh.

As a general rule, the first period is the best for ibex and the nearer ammon blocks, and the second for the further parts of Ladakh and for Tibetan antelope, which are only found in Chang Chenmo.

Officially, it is sixteen marches from Srinagar to Leh, but there is little difficulty in reducing this considerably, if pony transport is used and the whole party is mounted. The ammon blocks are from six to ten marches beyond Leh, so two months' leave is the absolute minimum that is necessary for a shoot in further Ladakh.

Occasionally your agent may be able to let you have a tent that has been left with his representative at Leh by some other party, and this will save a certain amount in the cost of transport. If a long expedition is planned, starting early in the year, it will pay to send all stores, which will not deteriorate, on to Leh during the previous autumn before the passes are closed to pony transport. This will save a considerable amount, as transport costs double the summer rate before April 15th.

Clothing suitable for extremes of heat and cold is necessary, and some protection for the face from the

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continual dry and biting winds is essential. A balaclava helmet is probably as good as anything for this purpose. Take a shot gun, or better still, a rook rifle, as in some parts of the country a fair amount of small game may be found.

In the higher parts of Ladakh strong winds are the rule and an ordinary tent is cold and extremely draughty. A tent with a sewn-in floor, or one of the ordinary Whymper pattern is far more suitable.

2. Ovis Ammon Hodgsoni.

Ladakhi name: Nyan.

(See Map facing page 210.)

This magnificent sheep, which, when fully grown, stands nearly four feet high at the shoulder, is by far the finest game animal in Ladakh, and closely competes with the markhor for the position of king among Himalayan game. In colour, ammon are a greyish sandy brown. They have rather long, slender legs, which are admirably adapted to fast galloping across the easy hills of the country they inhabit. During the winter old rams have a conspicuous ruff of white hair, but this gets smaller as the summer advances and sometimes disappears completely.

The horns of a fully grown ram always look enormous, and a really good head seems too heavy for an animal of that size to carry. When perfect, the horns form almost a complete circle with the points turning up and out, but one or both tips are nearly always broken, as the rams are great fighters during the rutting season, which starts in September. It is said that the clashing of their horns

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when they are fighting can sometimes be heard at a great distance.

The record measurement given by Rowland Ward is that of a picked up head measuring 57 inches, with a girth 18¾ inches, but Stockley doubts whether this head was actually that of an ammon. The limit under which they may not be shot is 38 inches; a good head will measure about 42 inches, with a girth of about 17½ inches. The females have small insignificant horns.

Ammon have excellent sight and scenting powers and are extremely wary. These qualities, aided by the open country they inhabit and the constantly shifting Tibetan winds, make them exceedingly difficult animals to stalk successfully.

When hunting ammon, remember that the most fatal mistake that you can make is to be in a hurry. Rams that have once been disturbed have a habit of clearing right off, and a chance missed may mean days of extra work. They feed during the morning and evening and it is therefore necessary to be out on the ground early and late. Spy each section of the ground carefully and make certain that it is empty before showing yourself. They are difficult to make out, as they harmonize very closely with their surroundings, but old rams can usually be distinguished at a considerable distance by their ruffs and their lighter colour.

Adult rams nearly always stick together in small bands of four or five, and keep well away from the ewes. Their feeding grounds vary a good deal with the seasons. In spring the nearer blocks and lower ground are the best, but during the second period they may be found right up to the borders of Indian territory. Owing to the great height at which they are hunted breathing is difficult, so it is advisable to ride whenever possible, even during

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the preliminary portion of a stalk, and a short rest before taking the shot is almost essential if the rifle is to be held absolutely steady.

b. Burrhel.

Ladakhi name : Napu.

Sportsmen rarely make a special trip to Kashmir in order to shoot burrhel, but they form, perhaps, the best of the side lines on an expedition where ammon are the chief object.

The western limit of burrhel in Ladakh is somewhere about Khalatse. East of this they are widely distributed and are particularly numerous in the Chang Chenmo, Nubra and upper parts of the Shyok valleys. They also occur throughout Zaskar. But, in spite of their numbers, the best heads obtainable in Ladakh do not seem to run as large on an average as they do further east, particularly in Sikkim, and there must be hundreds of fully grown rams in Ladakh that never reach the shootable limit.

The burrhel is a handsome stockily built sheep, short in the leg and standing rather less than three feet at the shoulder. To naturalists, the animal presents many points of interest, as it is considered to form the connecting link between the sheep and the goat family. To the ordinary observer, however, these points of similarity are not very obvious and the animal appears an undoubted sheep. In colour, burrhel are bluey-grey, with white under-parts, and the rams have a handsome black throat and chest. Their coat is thick and close, and, if a ram is shot when the skin is in good condition, it will make up into a very attractive rug.

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The smooth, olive-green horns are set close together, and curve outwards, downwards and, in large heads, back. At first they are somewhat difficult to judge accurately, but after some practice, and provided a view can be obtained from several angles, so that both the spread, drop and backward curve can be estimated, an accurate guess is a matter of no great difficulty. The record head from Kashmir is 31½ inches, but considerably larger heads have been obtained from Sikkim and Tibet. The limit is 22 inches and a 26-inch head is good. The females are much smaller, both in body and horn.

Burrhel frequently congregate in large herds, among which good rams may sometimes be found, but as a rule the old rams stick together in small companies, at any rate during the spring and early summer.

They usually inhabit fairly easy ground, but they like to have cliffs at hand to which they can retreat if alarmed. It is rare to see them much below 14,000 feet and they frequently go to over 19,000. Hunting them at such heights, even over easy ground, is hard and exhausting work.

Burrhel harmonise in the most amazing way with the blue-grey shaly hills among which they live, and they are, therefore, extremely difficult to pick out, except when feeding in the morning and evening, when they are on the move and are easier to find. However, as burrhel never take to impossible ground unless alarmed, and as there is never cover enough to hide them, they may be hunted with success at any hour of the day, and this is one of the pleasantest features of the sport.

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c. Sharpu.

The Ladakhi and Balti name is the same.

(*See Map facing page* 110.)

The sharpu is distributed over a wide area of country, and occurs on either bank of the Indus throughout the greater portion of its course in Indian territory until it reaches the plains. The same animal goes by the name of gud in Sind, oorial in the Salt Range, and oorin in Astor and Gilgit. It is a light, sandy red in colour and appears built for speed. The rams have a black ruff which is quite conspicuous during the winter, when it contrasts handsomely with the general colour of their coats. A big ram will measure nearly three feet at the shoulder, but the females are smaller and have insignificant horns.

The record head is 38 inches; the limit under which they may not be shot is 23 inches, and a decent head would measure about 27 inches, with an eleven-inch girth.

In Ladakh most of the sharpu ground is divided into blocks, of which ten are open in each part of the season. Sharpu do not seem to mind heat and are to be found fairly low down at all seasons of the year. The type of ground they inhabit is mostly easy and they are not particularly difficult to stalk, but they have all the senses well developed and, when alarmed, show a fine turn of speed. They are very restless animals by nature and continually get up and move off after they appear to have settled down for the day; a habit that frustrates a fair proportion of stalks.

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Sharpu shooting is very pleasant sport. Even if good rams are not easy to find, a number of animals are usually to be seen each day; the country is easy; and there is none of the grim seriousness that marks a day after ammon or markhor.

d. Tibetan Gazelle.

Ladakhi name : Goa.

The goa is a most graceful little animal measuring about two feet at the shoulder. In colour it is sandy fawn with a white patch on the rump and a black tail. The does are hornless, but the bucks have short handsomely ringed horns, much bent back at about half their length. The record head from Ladakh is about 14½ inches; twelve would be good anywhere and the limit under which they may not be shot is ten inches.

In Indian territory they are only found on the left bank of the Indus near to the Tibetan border. They are by no means common anywhere, except in Tibet, where they are said to occur in fair numbers. In Ladakh they seem to have greatly decreased during the present century and only one may now be shot on the Kashmir license.

Goa inhabit the same ground as ammon and are usually to be found in small parties of four or five. Their eyesight and hearing are first rate, but their scenting powers are very poor, and for this reason, though naturally wary, they are much more easily stalked and shot than ammon.

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e. Tibetan Antelope.

Ladakhi name : Chiru.

The only place in Indian territory where these animals are to be found is in the Chang Chenmo valley, which they visit in fair numbers during the later summer months. The second leave period is therefore the best. In parts of Tibet they are said to occur in enormous herds, but in Indian territory parties of three or four are usual.

Chiru are somewhat heavily built and stand about 22 inches at the shoulder. The coat is thick and heavy, but, when the skin is taken off, it is so thin and tears so easily, that it is of little use. A curious feature of Tibetan antelope is their marked puffiness about the nose and mouth.

The females have no horns, but those of the bucks are long and almost straight, with a slight forward curve, and are heavily notched on the anterior side. The record head from Ladakh measures 25 inches, but 23½ inches would be good, and the limit is 21 inches.

They may be found feeding on the grassy flats of the Chang Chenmo valley at any hour of the day, but their habit of digging shallow pits, in which to lie, together with the mirage effects that are common there during the midday hours, sometimes make them difficult to spot. Chiru see and hear well, but their scent is poor, and they are not particularly difficult animals to stalk once the grounds they inhabit are reached.

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f. Ibex.

Ladakhi name : Skin. Kashmiri : Kheyl.

Though fairly common in parts of Ladakh, ibex are more numerous, and the heads also run consistently somewhat larger in Baltistan, where they form the chief object of the big game hunter. In Ladakh an average of 40 to 41 inches should be obtained, if care is exercised. Only two ibex may be shot in Ladakh on the Kashmir license.

On the way to and from Leh ibex may be found in some of the nullahs opening out of the Indus valley, but the best localities in Ladakh, if really good heads are sought after, are the valleys of the Shyok and Nubra rivers. The disadvantage of this district is that it lies off the route to ammon ground and therefore a visit to it entails a considerable detour and much extra time. In the Nubra and Shyok valleys there is, however, the added attraction of much good burrhel ground, where first class heads may be obtained. (See also page 221, *et seq.*)

g. Miscellaneous.

Other animals that may be met with in Ladakh are kiang, wolves, snow leopards, lynx, marmots and wild yak. Of these, kiang are perhaps the commonest, and certainly the most unpleasant. These wild asses are ugly brutes of 12 to 13 hands, sandy-red in colour with a dark mane. They are quite untameable and are a perfect pest when stalking ammon or goa, for, as soon as they catch sight of you, they gallop up, attract their friends, who come too, and between them they disturb the whole

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country-side. There is no point in shooting them except as a safety valve for one's temper.

Wolves are common in some parts of Ladakh, particularly Rupshu. They are of two varieties, grey and black, of which the grey is the commoner. The Ladakhi name is shanko. They do much damage to the flocks of the nomad herdsmen, and kill large numbers of goa and ammon when a severe winter brings with it a heavy fall of snow. They should certainly be shot if an opportunity presents itself, but, as they are largely nocturnal in their habits, this does not occur very often.

Snow leopards are fairly numerous, but it is always a great matter of luck if a chance of shooting one is obtained. They are described more fully in the section on Baltistan.

Marmots are common in many places and it is always amusing to watch them popping about the entrance to their burrows. They are a bright reddish-brown in colour, about the size of a small spaniel, and they utter the most piercing alarm whistles. They are easily shot with a 22 rifle, but it is a pity to do so.

A lynx may be met with occasionally, but they are nowhere common. It is said that they are a good deal lighter in colour than the European breed, but otherwise much the same in appearance.

Years ago, wild yaks used to be shot regularly, but they are now very rarely seen in Indian territory, though they are believed to be still common enough in the remoter parts of Tibet. They appear occasionally in the Chang Chenmo valley in the late summer, but, as they are of the cow tribe and the Maharajah of Kashmir is a Hindu, they may not be shot in any circumstances. The bulls grow to the immense size of 16 hands, or more, and are covered with masses of coarse black hair, so long

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that it almost sweeps the ground. Their tails are heavily tufted and there is a considerable market for yaks' tails in India, where they are used as fly whisks.

The Tibetan name is dong, or donkh. They are supposed to have poor eyesight, but amazing scenting powers. But by far the most amazing thing about this curious animal is that it should be able to exist at all in so bare and barren a country.

§ 4.

Baltistan.

(For Baltistan shooting regulations, see Appendix two.)

The shooting season in Baltistan is divided into the usual two periods, both of which offer certain advantages. In the first part, snow is still lying low on the mountains, and this confines the animals to a comparatively limited area, so that they are fairly easy to find. But the way there by the only route that is then practicable, namely by Kargil and the Indus valley, is much longer, and the crossing of the Zoji La is likely to be troublesome. In the second period the Deosai route to Skardu is open and this reduces the length of the journey by a week or more. But, though the journey there is thus far easier, the game can then wander at will over the whole expanse of the mountains, and is generally found far up towards the head of the nullah, and it is frequently necessary to bivouac high up near the feeding grounds so that the stalk may be attempted early in the morning. At this time of year, also, the heat in the Indus valley, particularly in the narrow gorges below Skardu, is sometimes very trying.

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THE INDUS VALLEY BELOW SKARDU.

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Ibex and snow leopards are found throughout Baltistan; sharpu only near Skardu; red bear occasionally and locally; and markhor from about two marches below Skardu right down to the borders of the Gilgit Agency. Several nullahs are kept closed as sanctuaries and one or two others are reserved for the local rajahs. The open ground for markhor extends down the Indus valley from the village of Mendi, which is situated four rough marches below Skardu. Two or three nullahs just below Mendi, however, have been closed for a number of years, and, to get good open markhor ground, it is usually necessary to go nearly a week's march down the Indus from Skardu.

Markhor may be shot above Mendi, but only in specially reserved nullahs, of which two are open each year and are allotted to applicants by the Secretary of the Game Preservation Department in Srinagar. Although these reserved nullahs usually hold one or two fair markhor and a number of ibex, the best chance of getting a 48 to 50-inch head is to go well below Mendi to the Haramosh district.

The disadvantages of Haramosh are the time it takes to get there from Srinagar, the extremely rough going during the last five or six marches, when it may easily take a loaded coolie ten hours to cover as many miles, the almost total lack of supplies, and the extremely difficult country in which the markhor must be hunted. All of which makes a good markhor head obtained in Haramosh a most hardly earned trophy.

2. Ibex.

Kashmiri name: Kheyl.

Ibex are to be found throughout Baltistan; the Gilgit Agency, including Astor; and parts of Ladakh, and

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Kishtwar; but it is in Baltistan that they are the most numerous and where the finest heads are usually obtained. In the popular and more easily reached nullahs, opening off the lower reaches of the Shyok and Shigar rivers, and generally in the neighbourhood of Skardu, they are regularly shot, and, though this does not seem to affect their numbers materially, the chance of getting a really fine head in such a popular district is not very great. There is, however, much ground that is rarely visited, though some of it is no more difficult to reach than the more popular nullahs, and, if you are fortunate enough to possess a shikari who has some initiative and is prepared to spend time searching more or less new ground for really big heads, with any luck you should obtain ibex with horns measuring from 44 to 46 inches. Almost every nullah holds shootable bucks, and an average of 42 inches should be obtained anywhere in Baltistan without undue difficulty.

The ibex of the Himalayas is a strongly built stocky goat, measuring about 40 inches at the shoulder. In colour it varies from deep chocolate brown to dirty cream. Most ibex seem to be parti-coloured. Beneath the long ordinary hair there is a second coat of very short, soft, and thick hair, called pushm, which insulates them from the severe winter cold. In the spring, when their thick winter coat is coming out in handfuls, they appear extremely ragged and unkempt. The ewes are somewhat smaller and have horns only a few inches long, but the bucks are distinguished by their huge scimitar-shaped horns, heavily notched and ridged in front, by their conspicuous black beard, and their overpowering goaty smell.

The record head for Kashmir comes from Gilgit and measures 55 inches, but far larger heads have been obtained elsewhere, and Burke, in his "Indian Field Shikar Book," mentions one of 59½ inches shot in the Tian Shan.

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The limit under which they may not be shot is 35 inches, but this might well be increased, for a 35-inch ibex head is a miserable affair. It is not very difficult to judge an ibex's horns fairly accurately after some practice, if it is remembered that a horn, which describes much less than a semi-circle, is rarely of any great size.

Ibex do not seem to mind snow very much and, though they descend considerably lower in winter than in summer, they may frequently be seen on ground that is deep in snow for miles on every side. After a heavy snowfall, they keep to exposed rocks and ridges, where the snow cannot lie so deep, and browse off any small shrubs that are still exposed. In summer ibex retreat to the highest recesses of the hills, descending each evening to feed.

Large herds are not uncommon and, though good heads may sometimes be found among them, the old bucks usually remain apart in parties of half-a-dozen o so. They do not as a rule frequent particularly bad ground and it is rare to have to face anything worse than easy scrambling when hunting them. They have well-developed powers of scent and hearing, and good sight, but they cannot be classed among the most difficult of Himalayan animals to stalk, as their regular habits, and the fact that they frequently neglect to guard the ground that lies above them, makes them fairly easy to circumvent.

Unless disturbed, they usually remain within a comparatively small area for several days on end, descending to feed each evening and retiring to inaccessible cliffs during the day, always by more or less the same route. So that, if the habits of a herd are carefully studied for some time, it is often a simple matter to plan an effective stalk. For this reason it is important not to

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be in too great hurry, and the first day or two in an ibex nullah should be devoted to the telescope and field glasses and not to the rifle.

Among mountains the echo is very confusing and a herd will sometimes rush close past a sportsman after the first shot, thereby giving him a second chance, and, as they usually move in short rushes, pausing for a few seconds every now and then, it is sometimes possible to get in two or more effective shots. When firing at a wounded ibex, wait for one of these pauses, when a more accurate aim can be taken.

Vigne, who travelled through Baltistan about a hundred years ago, says that one of the methods, which the natives used when hunting ibex, was for a large party to walk through their feeding grounds, where one would conceal himself and the others return to the valley. The ibex would assume that everyone had gone and would return, to be duly shot by the concealed hunter. One cannot help thinking that the animals of those days must have been a good deal less sophisticated, or else the patience of hunters must have been greater than it is to-day.

b. Markhor.

The Kashmiri name is the same.

This fine member of the goat family carries as grand a pair of horns as any animal living. It is very limited in its range and, aided by its highly-developed natural powers and the extraordinarily bad ground on which it lives, is a most difficult animal with which to get on terms. In fact, with the exception of the ovis ammon, there is probably no other form of big game hunting that requires more hard work or patience before success is achieved.

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The horns of markhor vary very much according to the locality in which they live, but, with the exception of the straight-horned variety, which is found among the hills of Afganistan and the North-West frontier, the animals themselves do not appear to differ materially. In appearance, the markhor is a large thick-set goat, sometimes measuring as much as 40 inches at the shoulder. The females and young rams are a light sandy-grey in colour, but shootable rams usually have much longer coats of a lighter shade, which is sometimes almost white, and, in addition, they have long black beards and white manes, which merge into the masses of hair on their shoulders. The goaty smell of an old ram is quite overpowering.

An old markhor standing on the edge of some high precipitous cliff, with the hair of his beard and mane blowing in the wind, and his horns, as someone or other has admirably described them, appearing like two young withered pine trees on his head, is a magnificent sight.

The horns of the markhor found in the Kaj-i-Nag and in Chitral, commonly known as the Pir Panjal variety, usually form a well defined spiral and may fairly be compared with an exaggerated corkscrew. A large head of this variety would have three or three-and-a-half turns. Contrasting with this type is the Astor variety, which occurs throughout the Gilgit Agency, in which the horns rise almost vertically for a few inches from the head, then turn through a large angle almost parallel to the ground, and then again upwards. The horns of this variety are also spiral, but the first turn is so wide that there is sometimes less than two complete turns in a shootable head. In Baltistan and Haramosh a very handsome intermediate type, in which two-and-a-half to three turns go to a decent

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head, is the most usual. These varieties have no absolutely hard and fast boundaries and all types may be found occasionally in Baltistan.

The record markhor head is $65\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Under the game laws no markhor with horns of less than 45 inches may be shot. This is intentionally on the high side in order to protect them as far as possible. A good head would measure 48 to 50 inches.

Markhor are difficult to find, extremely wary, and, if frightened or disturbed, they will clear right out of the nullah and will not return for several days. It is of primary importance, therefore, to exercise extreme caution in a markhor nullah and to leave nothing to chance. Their alarm note is a curious high-pitched little "ponk."

Markhor like to have cover in which to spend the day and to which they retreat in bad weather, and they never, or at any rate very rarely, appear on any but the most broken and precipitous ground. In fact, in a typical markhor nullah it is frequently a matter of considerable difficulty to find sufficient level ground on which to pitch the smallest tent, and the rotten rock and steep shaly slopes, over which they must be hunted, demands a sure foot and a steady head.

In winter markhor come down very low, for, unlike the ibex, they cannot tolerate snow, but in summer they migrate high up into the mountains and must be searched for near the head of the nullah. Summer rain-storms, however, drive them down several thousand feet, but in wet weather they usually remain in cover, when they are very difficult to locate. The rut is in December, when they lose much of their natural caution, and, being driven low by the winter snows, numbers of them are killed by the natives. This poaching occurs even in remote districts, but to a far larger extent in the Kaj-i-Nag, where the

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Markhor Ground in Haramosh.

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markhor have benefited from the game laws less than any other animal.

Markhor heads are not at all easy to judge, and much practice and a view from several angles is necessary before an accurate estimate can be made. Both the spread, length and the closeness of the spiral have to be taken into consideration. As a general rule a horn with less than two complete turns, unless it is of the extreme Astor type is below the limit. Markhor horns are measured from behind along the keel.

When fired at, they move off in short rushes, like ibex, and it may be possible to get in a shot or two between the rushes. They never seem to hurry, but the time they take to climb or descend over two or three thousand feet of broken precipice is amazingly short, and the nonchalant way in which they leap from one insignificant foothold to another is extraordinary. Like most Himalayan game they feed in the morning and evening, and repair to some high and safe retreat to spend the day where it is almost hopeless to approach them.

There is a strong tradition among the natives that markhor eat snakes, but this has never been satisfactorily proved. On the hills they inhabit a number of snakes are to be found, and the name markhor is derived from the Persian words meaning snake-eater; so the legend may be true in spite of its apparent absurdity.

c. Snow Leopard.

(Also known as the ounce.)

Hindi name : Safed cheetah.

Throughout Astor, Baltistan and Ladakh snow leopards are common, but they are very rarely shot.

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This is chiefly due to their nocturnal habits, for their pug marks are noticed by almost every sportsman who has visited these districts. They rarely seem to enter forests, and, at any rate during the summer, they live high among mountains, where they prey heavily on the herds of burrhel and ibex. The presence of a snow leopard is often sufficient to disturb all other game in a nullah, perhaps for days on end.

Snow leopards are generally shot in a chance encounter, but sitting up should be successful if careful arrangements are made. It is essential, however, that the whereabouts and habits of the animal should be known fairly accurately beforehand. Otherwise nothing more exciting than a cold and uneventful vigil is likely to ensue.

Their skins are very handsome, with a ground colour of grey, thickly spotted with irregular rosettes of a darker shade, but persons who have seen them in the dusk, or by the light of the moon, assert that they then appear almost white. Most of the skins exposed for sale in the shops of Srinagar are obtained from Central Asia, where numbers of the animals are trapped during the winter.

d. Sharpu.

Balti name : Oorin.

Sharpu exist in fair numbers on either bank of the Indus near the Shyok and Shigar confluences and for some marches upstream from Skardu. Early in the year they are to be found quite low down and may be frequently seen, if not shot, from the main Kargil-Skardu road. The heads of Baltistan sharpu do not as a rule run very large, but a 28 to 30-inch pair of horns should be secured without very much difficulty. (See also page 215).

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§ 5.

Astor.

(For Astor shooting regulations, see Appendix two.)

Astor is an interesting but expensive district in which to shoot. The season, as elsewhere, is divided into two parts and ten guns only are permitted to enter Astor in each period. Of these, only six may shoot markhor in the nullah allotted to them.

Very fine markhor and ibex may be obtained, sharpu, mostly with poor heads, are numerous in those parts of the country that lie in close proximity to the Indus, and a snow leopard may also be shot with luck. Red bears also occur. All transport and supplies, both for the license-holder and his servants, have to be brought from Srinagar, and this adds largely to the cost of the trip. Ladies are not permitted to cross the Burzil or Kamri passes into Astor.

Astor is the best district for persons with only a short time at their disposal, who are anxious to obtain good markhor and ibex, as it can be reached without difficulty in a week or eight days from Srinagar along the main Gilgit road. The crossing of the Rajdiangan and Burzil passes may, however, be a matter of some difficulty early in the year, as they usually lie deep in snow until about the end of April.

The country is mostly arid, and the ground steep and difficult, but large areas of cultivation occur in the valleys, and some of the hill-sides are fairly extensively wooded with birch and hazel and pine.

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As a rule markhor heads from Astor are very different from those obtained in Chitral, or the Kaj-i-Nag. There is usually but two complete twists in a shootable Astor head, and, two or three inches above the skull, the horns turn almost at right angles parallel to the ground and spread widely before turning upward. Heads measuring 48 inches should be obtained in Astor, and with any luck up to fifty inches.

§ 6.

The Kaj-i-Nag and Shemshibri.

(For special regulations, see Appendix two.)

This is a most delightful country for the man on short leave, who cannot afford the time to march to better and more distant shooting grounds. The Kaj-i-Nag mountains are easily accessible. The shooting grounds can be reached in two or three short marches from Baramulla, and Baramulla is but a thirty-mile motor drive from Srinagar. There is a fair amount of game, with the chance of bagging a good markhor, and the scenery and surroundings are delightful, so that, even if the bag is sometimes unimpressive, a trip among these mountains is always a delightful experience and well within the means of a modest income.

The game list includes markhor, red and black bear, leopard, and gooral, but, although the number of guns permitted to shoot in each period is limited to six, the district, as far as markhor and red bear are concerned, has never recovered from the overshooting from which it suffered years ago. To-day poachers, rather than sportsmen, are responsible for the decrease in the number of

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these animals, and markhor particularly have benefited but little from the protection theoretically afforded them by the game laws.

Black bear are fairly plentiful everywhere, gooral occur in moderate numbers, and so do leopards, but to shoot a leopard among these heavily wooded hills is difficult and chancy work. Red bear may not be shot actually within the Kaj-i-Nag district, but elsewhere they are still fairly numerous.

There are no longer very many markhor left, and, although good heads are still occasionally obtained, the number seems to decrease from year to year. Heads of the Pir Panjal variety, (so called because, in the sixties and seventies of last century, markhor with this type of horn were shot in large numbers on the southern side of the Pir Panjal range,) are the rule, and some of the largest heads ever shot have come from the Kaj-i-Nag district. (For many years the Pir Panjal mountains, owing to overshooting in the past and present-day poaching, have held so little game that they have not been worth visiting.) In the Kaj-i-Nag only a few nullahs still hold markhor, and, as the cover for the most part is very thick, it is often exceedingly difficult to locate any markhor that the allotted nullah may contain. The element of luck, which is never entirely absent in big game shooting, plays a larger part than usual in the Kaj-i-Nag.

§ 7.

Kishtwar.

(No special rules.)

This easternmost district of Kashmir has been rather neglected in recent years in favour of other more distant

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shooting grounds, but, although in Kishtwar there are no trophies to be obtained that can compare with the magnificent markhor and ammon, which are the reward of the hunter in Baltistan or Ladakh, the country should by no means be despised. It is fairly easily accessible, the game list is long and varied, the country itself well-wooded, and the scenery is magnificent. At present there is no limit to the number of guns that may shoot there each season, and, as there is no system of reserving nullahs, other than being there first, the early arrival has the largest selection from which to choose.

Islamabad is easily reached from Srinagar, either by car or boat, and from there it is four marches to the town of Kishtwar and the capital of the province. The shooting grounds open off either side of the Chenab valley as far as Atholi, four marches beyond Kishtwar, but, as a rule, the best nullahs will be found beyond Atholi as far as the foot of the Umasi La, four marches further still.

Up to about the middle of April some difficulty is likely to be experienced in crossing the Marbal or Sinthan passes, which separate Kishtwar from the Kashmir valley, as the snow lies deep upon them until far into the spring. From Kishtwar to Atholi the road is fair, but beyond the going for the most part is rough. Generally speaking the shooting grounds in Kishtwar are more than ordinarily difficult. In many places the mountains rise so steeply from the valley of the Chenab that the region of perpetual snow is reached in a very few miles. Much game will be seen in completely inaccessible places, and stalking will often call for considerable skill in climbing among steep, broken rock and scrub.

The spring is by far the best time in which to shoot, for the game is kept down by the snow, and the undergrowth is then at its thinnest. Later in the year the jungle grows

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tall and thick and large areas of mountain are free for the game to wander over. During the rainy months of mid-summer the few paths are practically impassable, and when the weather again becomes settled as autumn approaches, the long grass, that has sprouted during the summer, lies flat upon the hill-sides and makes a slippery and dangerous surface.

Ticks, which live in the long grass, are a plague at times. Supplies are few and transport is sometimes difficult to obtain, so it is essential to travel with a minimum of gear.

The game list includes red and black bear, ibex, tahr, gooral, serow, leopard, and musk deer, and there are a few barking deer, which are preserved. Ibex are not generally distributed below Atholi, nor are large herds common, but beyond, in the Padar division, they are plentiful. Fine heads are sometimes shot in this district and an average of about forty inches should be obtained without great difficulty. Black bear occur in numbers, and gooral, serow, musk deer, and leopards are to be found in most nullahs. Red bear occur in suitable localities and tahr are numerous almost everywhere.

Various sorts of pheasants abound, but, although they make a welcome addition to the pot, they are not easy to shoot and anything like a large bag is unlikely. They are a perfect curse when stalking, as they get up from under one's feet with a terrific clatter and warn every living thing within hearing that something unusual is afoot.

a. Gooral.

Kashmiri name : Pij.

This little animal affords much incidental sport in the intervals of hunting other more important game, or

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during the evenings of days that have been spent on the march, when a stroll in the neighbourhood of the camp may result in an amusing stalk and a welcome addition to the larder.

Gooral are to be found almost throughout the wooded zone of the Himalayas at all elevations below about 8,000 feet ; a slightly different, but distinct species also occurs in Burmah. In colour they are a brownish-grey, but the shade varies a good deal and occasional examples of partial albinism have been reported. A dark stripe runs along the line of the backbone and there is a small white patch on the throat. Gooral are stockily built and stand about 26 inches at the shoulder. Horns are carried by both sexes, but they are short and insignificant, particularly those of the females. A pair measuring seven inches would be above the average.

They are generally found singly or in pairs, and on steep rocky ground with a good deal of near-by cover, to which they retire during the heat of the day, or when alarmed. As a rule they avoid the sun, and, like the serow, prefer to feed on the shady side of the nullah, which should always be searched first.

When alarmed they make a loud hissing noise.

Although they frequently live close on the outskirts of villages, gooral are distinctly wary animals, and their small size and dull colouring make them difficult to pick out with the glasses and a poor target for the rifle. For the novice, they afford an excellent subject on which to practise the art of searching for game, stalking, and shooting at a poorly defined target at unknown range ; and, to the experienced sportsman, they give much amusement at times that might otherwise be wasted.

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b. Red Bear.

Kashmiri name : Shin harpat.

Hindi name : Lal bhalu.

The brown, red, or snow bear, as it is variously called, is much the same as the European brown bear in appearance. Many years ago they were extremely common throughout the Himalayas, particularly in Kashmir, and Vigne says that in his day they were even more numerous than black bears, while Kinloch mentions a friend of his who saw twenty-eight and shot seven in one day during the summer of 1864. However, as they have attractive skins and are fairly easy to shoot, they used to be killed in such numbers that they are now by no means common, and have completely disappeared from many localities where they once abounded. In some localities at a distance from the main valley they are still fairly plentiful.

They occur in Baltistan and Gilgit, but only in small numbers. They are more numerous in the Dras valley, Gurais, Tilel and throughout Kishtwar, where some of the largest that have been shot in recent years have been obtained. Red bear vary considerably in colour, from quite a dark to a light chocolate brown, and as a rule the old males are the darkest. Their fore claws are much longer than those of the black bear and the tracks of the two species can always be distinguished by the size of the marks left by them. Red bears measuring as much as eight feet are said to have been shot, but a seven-foot bear would be a very large specimen. The females as a rule are a good deal smaller than the males.

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They live at a considerable altitude during the summer and wander right up to the permanent snow-line, but in the early spring, when they feed greedily off the first new grass, and again in the autumn, when the Indian corn is ripe, they descend quite low and may be found in places where it would be quite useless to search for them at other times of the year. They hibernate from November to about the middle of April. Their chief food is grass and the roots of various plants, but occasionally red bears turn into cattle thieves, and they have been known to devour carrion.

A red bear skin in good condition makes a beautiful rug, but in spring their coats are long and matted and in the summer much of the hair falls out. The autumn, therefore, when the new winter coat has just appeared, is the only time when the skins are perfect. Exceptions do occur, however, particularly in localities such as Dras, where the animals can never descend below about ten thousand feet, and where they sometimes seem to carry a fair coat right through the summer. Female red bears with small cubs at heel may not be shot, and in any case the skin of such an animal would have little hair on the under-parts and would be not worth taking off.

Red bears may sometimes be found feeding at all hours of the day, but generally only during the morning and evening. They have extraordinarily keen noses and fair hearing, but poor eyesight, so, if proper attention is paid to the direction of the wind, they are not difficult to approach. They rarely charge, even when wounded, and statements to the contrary can usually be put down to a case where a bewildered bear, attempting to escape, has chosen a line that leads him close past his attackers. However, reasonable precautions should always be taken.

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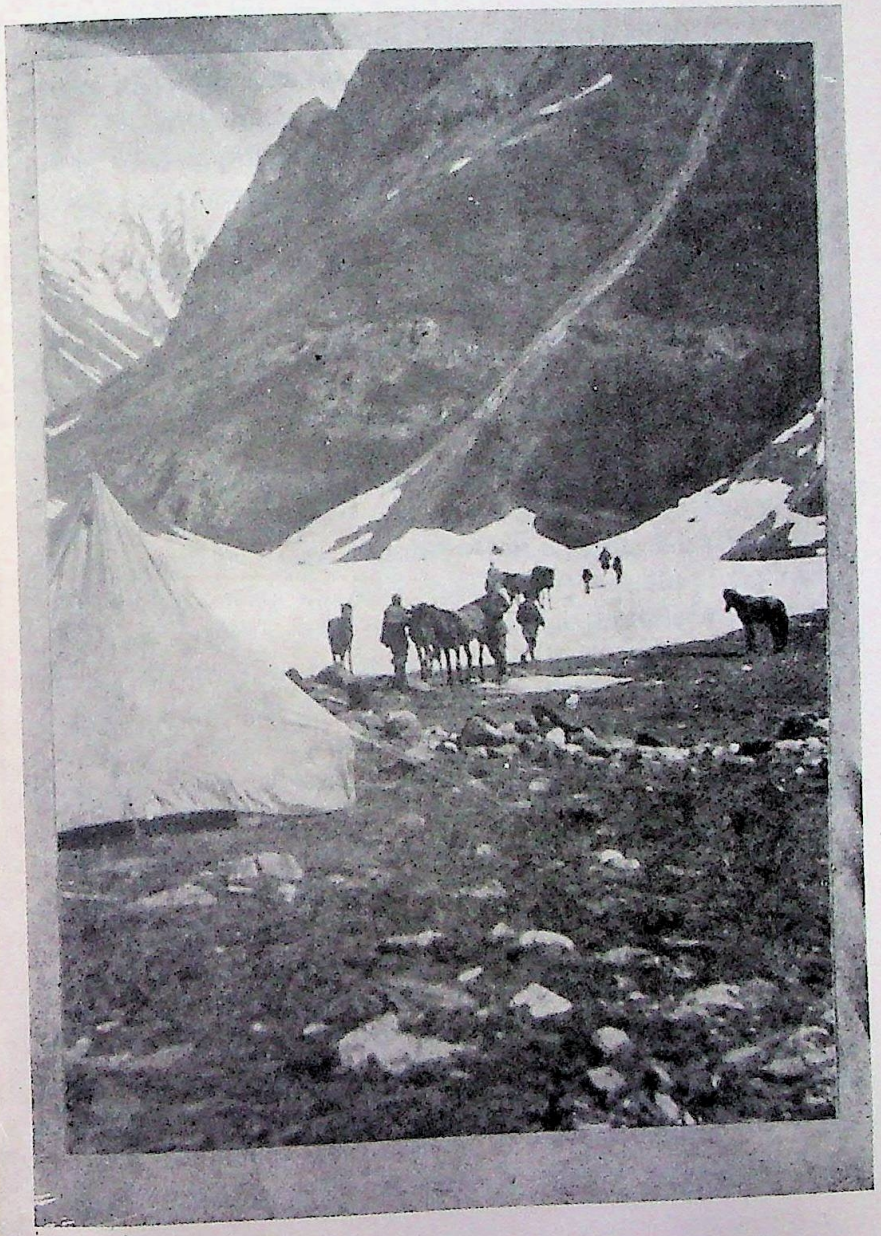

Red Bear Country near Dras.

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Red bears are chiefly hunted in that delightful upland belt between the forest and the eternal snow, and in such surroundings their pursuit cannot fail to be delightful. But they are such amusing animals to watch, and they only call for such elementary skill on the part of the hunter, that it is a pity to shoot more than a very few of them, even in the course of many encounters.

c. Tahr.

Kishtwari name : Kras.

Chamba name : Kart.

A few tahr are still to be found in the Pir Panjal range ; they are more numerous in the Wardwan valley, and occur in large numbers throughout Kishtwar and the neighbouring Chamba state. They are about the same size as an ibex, and in colour are a greyish-brown with an occasional tinge of red. Old bucks are usually the darkest, but the colour varies a good deal. Their hair is long and coarse, particularly round the neck and shoulders. Female tahr are smaller than the males and have insignificant horns, but the head of an old buck, though his horns cannot compare with those of an ibex or markhor, makes a fine trophy when well mounted.

The record head is about sixteen inches. Anything over thirteen inches would be good, and eleven inches is the limit below which they may not be shot. The horns are triangular in section, very thick at the base, and there is a well-defined keel in front. The first few inches are heavily ridged. In a good head the horns turn sharply back and then down, and the length is easy to judge fairly accurately, if it is remembered that no head is likely

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to be large, unless there is a pronounced downward curve. The goaty smell of an old buck is very strong.

Tahr live on the most appalling ground and, of those that are discovered, a large proportion will be in places that are quite inaccessible. They like a good deal of cover at hand and this adds largely to the difficulty of stalking them, for it is practically impossible to force a way through the undergrowth without making a noise. And, as a large part of the stalk is often conducted out of sight of the animal's feeding place, it is only too easy to lose direction.

Tahr have all the senses well developed, and, since the nature of the ground in which they live is almost always in their favour, the pursuit of them is quite as difficult as hunting ibex, or even markhor. But they are so much commoner than the latter that a mistake does not have to be paid for so dearly.

The old bucks usually separate from the herds and live either alone or in small parties. They do not like snow or wet, which always drives them considerably lower down. The rut occurs in December, and during the winter the villagers hunt them with dogs, who drive the tahr into deep snow, where they struggle helplessly until they are clubbed to death.

It is advisable to aim rather low at a tahr for the masses of hair on their shoulders is deceptive.

§ 8.

Other shooting grounds.

In addition to the shooting grounds described above, there are various other districts where moderate sport

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can be obtained. Many years ago, the Wardwan valley was one of the most popular places in Kashmir and was visited by so many sportsmen that at one time there was but little game left in it. However, several of the nullahs opening off it have been closed for a number of years as sanctuaries, and, with fewer people visiting the district, the head of game has increased largely. Fair ibex may be obtained there; tahr, gooral and red bear occur, and, of course, there are black bears and leopards also. In the autumn the barasingh shooting is good.

Zaskar is a large, inaccessible and barren country, that holds some good ibex in places, and any number of indifferent burrhel. It is no country for the novice, but an experienced hunter in search of new grounds might think it worth a visit. Few Kashmiri shikaris have been there and it is difficult to obtain reliable information regarding supplies, transport, or the best localities.

The country lying between Gurais, Dras, and Kargil, and the valley of the Suru river holds a certain amount of game. Red bear are to be found between Gurais and Dras, and ibex from Dras to Kargil.

Part of the charm of Kashmir shooting is that game may be discovered in the most unlikely places. The professional shikaris are most conservative. They return year after year to the same nullahs, and, if a particular district or nullah happens for any reason, such as over-shooting in the past, to become unpopular, it is possible that no one may visit it for years on end. It takes a certain amount of effort to overcome the prejudices of these men, and in exploring new or forgotten ground there is always the risk of returning empty-handed. But when success does occur in such circumstances it is all the sweeter.

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§ 9

Small Game Shooting.

(For particulars of licenses, etc., see Appendix two.)

In the swamps and lakes, which comprise a large portion of the western end of the valley, and on the lower slopes of the mountains that border it, a large variety of game birds abound, and offer wonderful shooting throughout the autumn and winter to the keen shot, who is prepared to work hard for his sport.

The season opens on the first of September, when the snipe shooting begins. Considerable numbers of these birds occur among the rice-fields and in suitable ground bordering the numerous jheels. But, though the conditions are incomparably more pleasant, the actual shooting is probably not so good as in some other parts of India, such as Bengal, where it is by no means uncommon for a good shot to bag between thirty and forty couple, and where the record stands at more than a hundred couple of snipe to one gun in a single day.

In Kashmir snipe are sometimes walked up, but they give far better sport when they are driven. On the larger jheels and reed-covered lakes, such as Anchar, where the water is deep and the birds spend the day resting on the water weeds, the guns sit among the rushes, each in a small shikara, and the snipe are driven towards them by a line of boats. Birds driven in this way afford most sporting shots, but those that fall are often difficult to find in the luxuriant growth of water weeds, among which a dog is completely useless.

Painted snipe are common early in the season, but these handsome birds fly slowly and laboriously and are

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not worth shooting. A good many snipe remain in the valley throughout the winter, when jack snipe also appear in fair numbers. Solitary snipe have also been shot occasionally.

In certain favoured localities among the lower hills a few wood-cock can sometimes be found, but they are never numerous. These birds are said to breed in Kashmir in considerable numbers, but it is supposed that many of them migrate elsewhere during the winter, and this, perhaps, explains their comparative scarcity during the shooting season.

Duck shooting starts on 16th September, though the main body of the migratory species does not appear until some weeks after the opening of the season. Several of the best jheels are reserved for the Maharajah, but there are dozens of others where excellent shooting can be obtained, particularly during the morning and evening flights. The Maharajah usually holds several big shoots each season, and on such occasions two to three thousand duck have sometimes been killed on the famous Hokra and Haigam jheels, in the course of a single day.

Fair flighting can be obtained along the Baramulla road within easy distance of Srinagar, but, if time permits, it is better to go somewhat further afield. The best sport will probably be obtained by taking a house-boat down to the Wular lake, which can be easily reached in a day and-a-half from Srinagar, and where wild-fowl teem in thousands throughout the autumn and winter. The duck, however, are most numerous in the autumn and again in the early spring, when the migrants are passing through Kashmir on their way to the breeding grounds further north.

Red-crested and white-eyed pochard, shoveller, mallard, gadwall, in some seasons, and pintail all visit Kashmir

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in large numbers, but the main flocks of pintail do not usually arrive until late in the autumn. Among the less common visitors are wigeon, tufted duck, goosander and smew, of all of which small flocks may usually be discovered each winter on the Wular lake and the larger jheels. Brahmany duck are occasionally seen and are probably stragglers from the main body, which migrates each spring from the plains to the breeding grounds in Ladakh. The stiff-tail, red-headed pochard and golden-eye have all been reported from Kashmir, but only on rare occasions.

Teal are found in countless thousands and the gargany teal is also common, but generally not until towards the end of the season. It is a curious fact, which has often been commented on, but never satisfactorily explained, that in the early autumn the large majority of the common teal, which are shot, are females, while later almost all are drakes in full plumage.

During the winter, flocks of grey-lag geese, thousands strong, spend the day on the Wular lake and flight to their feeding grounds in the direction of Haigam and Hokra in the evening, returning again soon after the sun is up. When a really big flock is disturbed, they appear like a dark cloud rising from the lake, and the noise of their wings and their excited gabble can be heard for miles. With their usual cunning geese very soon get to know the exact range of a shot gun, and fly quite unperturbed immediately overhead, but just out of range.

Bar-headed geese are by no means so common and generally only remain in any number for a few days on their way to and from the plains.

The wild-fowl on the Wular lake are continually harassed by native punt gunners, which makes them xtremely wary and practically impossible to approach ring the day. The punt guns used by these Kashmiri

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wild-fowlers are muzzle loaders made of several feet of piping with one end stopped up, and are primitive in the extreme. The charge is ignited by a length of smouldering coir thread fixed to a primitive hammer. Needless to say they are hopelessly inaccurate and, with their limited range, do not prove very deadly.

In severe winters much of the lake is frozen over and the wild-fowl spend the day resting on the ice-floes. Shooting in such weather is difficult, as the ice is usually not strong enough to bear a man on foot, and the half-frozen mud and slush of the marshes soon numbs the feet. A short pair of skis, or mud pattens, would then be extremely useful, as they would distribute one's weight over a larger area of ice and would prevent one from sinking into the mud.

In the crisp days of autumn, or during a spell of sunny winter weather, a week or two at the Wular lake is most delightful. On clear frosty days the scenery is superb. Particularly towards evening, when the sky is flooded with the rosy light of the setting sun, and the western-facing snow-fields are dyed a rich red gold; and, round the borders of the lake, the forests lie dark among the shadows, which spread rapidly upwards, until soon even the highest peaks have lost the sunlight and are all a frozen blue. Duck, geese, teal and snipe are there in thousands, chukor can be obtained within easy reach, and the hills on the northern and eastern sides of the lake hold numbers of fine stags, particularly late in the year, when heavy snow drives them down.

There are, too, any amount of other interesting birds to be observed on the lake and along its shores. Among the birds of prey, the magnificent Steppe eagle, Pallas' sea eagle, and marsh harriers are conspicuous. The latter are amazingly fast and powerful flyers which kill enormous

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quantities of teal, and it is a most interesting sight to watch one of these fine birds cut out a victim and, after a lengthy chase, strike it in mid-flight and bear it off in its talons.

In the marshy ground round the edges of the lake, lapwings can be distinguished feeding among the withered sedge, and the hoarse croak of a heron attracts the attention, as one of these ungainly birds flaps slowly overhead. From the clumps of trees surrounding the villages along the shores, the deep booming notes of the horned owl greet the advent of the dusk, and on the lake itself flocks of laughing gulls mingle with the wild-fowl.

The shooting season for chukor opens on October the first. These fine birds, which closely resemble rather large French partridges, inhabit hilly country between about three and ten thousand feet above the sea. They are widely distributed throughout Kashmir proper, Baltistan, and Gilgit, where large bags are sometimes made by the garrison. They also occur in some of the lower parts of Ladakh. Quite good chukor shooting can be obtained within very easy reach of Srinagar, but somewhat further afield the birds are, of course, rather more numerous and not so wild.

In the early part of the season, chukor are found at a considerable altitude, and very pleasant shooting can sometimes be obtained on off days, when camping in a barasingh nullah. It is necessary, however, to shoot at a considerable distance from the ground frequented by barasingh, as otherwise the noise is certain to disturb them. Later in the year the snow drives the birds down and they are then most numerous on the lower slopes of the hills on the fringes of the valley.

Walking them up is very hard work and does not give very satisfactory results. The going is usually very

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bad, and, as chukor are strong runners, they are often difficult to flush. When snow lies on the hills walking is even less easy and the birds find no difficulty in running over the snow as soon as the slightest crust appears on its surface. Driving, therefore, is generally the only way of making a satisfactory bag, and this method has also the advantage of giving very sporting and difficult shots. In fact the man, who can deal effectively with driven chukor swinging along a hill-side with their fast curving flight, should be able to distinguish himself in any company. A well-trained dog is most useful for finding runners.

There is little difficulty in finding a shikari who will be able to show you good chukor ground, but, of course, for every one that is really good there are a dozen that are worse than useless. Only a very few of these shikaris understand the art of driving, or placing stops, and unless the stops are correctly placed, good sport is most unlikely. Chukor invariably run uphill, so the line of stops should be placed a short distance above the highest gun. If the same shikari is to be employed for some time, it is worth taking a certain amount of trouble in teaching him how to place stops and manage a drive correctly.

On the immense hill-sides of the Himalayas a single gun will not find it easy to get good sport, and two or three guns should always shoot together if it can be arranged.

Other game birds that are likely to be met with, but only in small numbers, are quail, blue rock pigeons, monal and koklass pheasants, and ram chukor. Quail are rarely common, and blue rocks, though they are strong flyers and can give excellent sport, are rather neglected in favour of other game. Pheasants are fairly numerous in some localities, particularly in Kishtwar, but the nature of the ground rarely permits more than a few birds to be

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bagged at a time. The jungle is so thick and extensive that beating is usually impossible and winged birds can seldom be found, even with the help of a good dog.

That noble bird, the ram chukor, is found over a large part of Kashmir, Baltistan, and Astor, and is common in the Pir Panjal range in the neighbourhood of Gulmarg. Except in mid-winter, ram chukor rarely descend below the tree-line, and may be found in the summer at fourteen, or fifteen thousand feet, or even higher. The shooting season opens on September the fifteenth.

Ram chukor are large birds, almost as big as a moderate-sized goose, and, when once flushed, they fly fast and powerfully. They are difficult to approach, however, and a rook rifle is generally a more suitable weapon with which to pursue them than a twelve bore. At the height at which they live the air is keen and the scenery superb, and a day after ram chukor in the early autumn is bound to be delightful, even if, as is only too likely, the bag at the end of it is not impressive.

§ 10.

Fishing.

(For particulars of licenses, etc., see Appendix three.)

In a country such as Kashmir, which abounds in lakes, rivers and clear mountain streams, good fishing might naturally be expected, and, in fact, excellent and varied sport is obtainable within very easy reach of Srinagar. The indigenous fishes of the country, however, with the exception of that famous fighting fish the mahseer, have not much to recommend them, and present-day fishermen, therefore, owe an immense debt to the enter-

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prise and foresight of the English residents and officials of the past generation, who stocked a number of the Kashmir streams with brown and rainbow trout.

Trout were first introduced in 1900 and it was soon proved that conditions suited them. Since then they have been introduced to an ever-increasing number of waters. In several of the larger streams, they run to a considerable size and fish of over 14 lbs. have been caught, while nine to ten pound fish are not uncommon. In many of the streams, the trout rise freely to an artificial fly, but in others a minnow proves more successful. A hatchery has been established at Harwan, several miles outside Srinagar, at the further end of the Dal lake, and, to anyone interested in the art of pisci-culture, this hatchery will well repay a visit.

All the trout waters are strictly preserved and rules have been drawn up regarding the booking of waters, the number of fish that may be caught, and the size below which they must be returned. Before fishing for trout it is necessary to take out a license. Five rupees a day, or twenty-five rupees a week is the usual rate, and this, together with the various incidental expenses, such as the wages of a shikari, etc., make trout fishing in Kashmir by no means as cheap as one could wish.

Most of the better waters are some miles distant from Srinagar and it is usually simpler (and far more enjoyable) to fish them from a camp. These fishing camps are quite delightful. Situated among the most attractive scenery, in which rugged mountains, wooded hills, rich water-meadows, and the sparkling waters of a typical mountain stream all combine to form a delightful prospect, they are secluded, yet easily accessible, quiet, but not too solitary.

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The waters open for fishing, the opening dates of the different streams, and other details are changed from time to time, so an application to the Game Preservation Department for the latest edition of the fishing rules should be made before attempting to reserve any particular water.

A certain amount of tackle is obtainable in Srinagar, but it is advisable to take with you, if possible, all major items such as rods, reels, etc. Waders are required on a number of the streams.

By far the best mahseer fishing in Kashmir territory is obtainable in the Poonch river, and Tangrot, situated at the junction of the Poonch and Jhelum rivers, has been famous as a fishing centre for very many years. Tangrot is only about twenty-three miles from the town of Jhelum, which is situated on the main Calcutta-Peshawar railway, and it is, therefore, easily accessible. Very fine fish are regularly caught in these waters and the record stands at well over sixty pounds.

Fishing is obtainable during most of the year, but at Tangrot the best months are May, June, September and October, and on the Poonch river March, April and September to November. Flood water may, however, ruin the fishing at any time for several days on end.

The masheer fishing in the Kashmir valley is disappointing. Fish of well over forty pounds have been taken, but as a rule, of course, they run far smaller. The mahseer is a summer visitor to the valley, where it confines itself almost entirely to the Jhelum. Between Ningle and Sopor, near Baramulla, is the best locality, but good fish are also sometimes taken near Shadipore and Sumbal. During July and August, which are the best months, flies and mosquitoes are so troublesome and

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the air in the bed of the valley so oppressive, that the fishing cannot really be recommended.

There are two other fish with which the sportsman in Kashmir will probably become acquainted; the chiroo and the choosh, both of the barbel family. They both run up to somewhat over twenty pounds, but fish of such a size are very rare. They may be caught on a worm, or on mulberries during the season, and sometimes they will take a fly. They are not very sporting fish, though moderate sized ones sometimes show a fair amount of fight.

There is a third member of the barbel family indigenous to Kashmir, known by courtesy as the snow trout. They are found in the upper reaches of mountain streams, but rarely run to any size. Snow trout take a worm freely and will sometimes give quite amusing sport to the not-too-blasé fisherman. There are numbers of them in the Ferozepore stream a mile or two above Tangmarg, and a day spent there fishing for them is a pleasant change from golf. The roe of snow trout is said to be poisonous if eaten in any quantity.

A full account of Kashmir trout fishing is given in Colonel Wilson's book, "Trout fishing in Kashmir," and there is also a great deal of useful information in "Skene Dhu's" "Angler in India."

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APPENDIX ONE.

Summary of Visitors' Rules.

General.

1. When attending evening entertainments given by His Highness the Maharajah military officers should wear, subject to the regulations in force, either uniform or evening dress; others should wear evening dress.

2. Visitors wishing to see the Fort or Palace at Srinagar should give one day's notice to the Director, Visitors' Bureau. The Palace cannot be seen when the Maharajah is in residence.

3. All postal parcels addressed to European visitors and residents not engaged in trade are exempt from Customs duty.

4. Personal luggage, including two rifles, two shot guns and 500 cartridges, is exempt from Customs duty.

5. Not more than half a pint of spirit may be imported free and no beef, or anything prepared from beef, may be imported at all.

6. Visitors are requested to see that their servants do not smuggle dutiable articles past the Customs and, as visitors' luggage is not examined, they are expected, in return for this courtesy, to see that no evasion is countenanced.

7. Receipt stamps should be fixed to all receipts for payments exceeding twenty rupees.

8. Cows may not be killed in Kashmir and visitors are requested to see that their dogs do not worry these animals.

9. All complaints should be referred to the Director, Visitors' Bureau.

Servants and House-Boats.

1. Visitors are advised only to engage men who can produce a registration ticket signed by the Director, Visitors' Bureau.

2. Visitors are advised to send to the Director, Visitors' Bureau, any certificate which they grant to their servants; such certificates should on no account be granted direct.

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3. Owners of cook-boats may not object to lessee's sweepers living in their boats when necessary.

4. Visitors staying in Srinagar are strongly advised to have the terms on which they engage accommodation committed to writing.

5. When a visitor has already moored his house-boat, no one may moor alongside, unless both parties agree. This rule also applies to Gandarbal.

House-Boat Rents.

N.B.—All house-boats are divided into A and B classes according to their size and general condition.

6. (*a*) House-boats with four or more rooms, two bath-rooms, chowkidar, shikara, cook-boat and crew of two. A, Rs. 160; B, Rs. 125.

(*b*) With three rooms, two bath-rooms, etc., and crew of one. A, Rs. 110; B, Rs. 90.

(*c*) Doonga house-boats with four or more rooms, two bath-rooms, etc., and crew of two. A, Rs. 140; B, Rs. 100.

(*d*) With three rooms, two bath-rooms, etc., and crew of one. A, Rs. 90; B, Rs. 75.

(*e*) Boarded doongas with crew of four. A, Rs. 50; B, Rs. 40.

(*f*) Matted doongas with crew of four. A, Rs. 45; B, Rs. 35.

(*g*) Kitchen doongas with crew of three, Rs. 20; with crew of two, Rs. 12.

These rents are for fully furnished house-boats with strong ordinary furniture in good condition and also with crockery and cutlery for four persons.

7. Except between 15th April and 30th June and from 15th September to 30th November, when owners can refuse to let their boats for less than a month, they may not refuse short service.

8. The hire for short service is reckoned as follows :—

From 1 to 7 days, one week.
From 8 to 15 days, two weeks.
From 16 to 23 days, three weeks.
From 24 to 30 days, one month.

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Rent for any period beyond the period contracted for can be claimed according to the above table.

9. Owners who demand more than the above rates on account of extra good furniture must make a separate agreement.

10. An agreement for extra hire, if no definite period is specified, can be cancelled by two days' notice in writing served on the owner through the Director, Visitors' Bureau.

Rates for the Hire of Boats.

11. When boats are ordered from Srinagar to meet visitors, half the hire rate between Srinagar and the rendezvous is payable in addition to the fare for the journey.

	Furnished Boarded Doongas.		Furnished Matted Doongas.		Unfurnished Doongas.	
	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.
From Baramulla to Srinagar ...	5	12	4	12	3	0
From Srinagar to Baramulla ...	4	0	3	8	2	0
From Srinagar to Islamabad ...	5	12	4	12	3	0
From Islamabad to Srinagar ...	4	0	3	8	2	0
From Srinagar to Gandarbal and *vice versâ*	3	8	3	0	1	12
From Srinagar to Bandipur ...	4	0	3	8	2	6
From Bandipur to Srinagar ...	5	12	4	12	3	0

House-boats going down stream require from 4 to 6 extra boatmen, and when going upstream from 6 to 8, according to the size of the house-boat.

12. Rates for the hire of shikaras :—

For two hours or less	...	As. 2	
For each boatman	...	,, 3	
Between two and four hours	...	,, 2	
For each boatman	...	,, 4	
Between four and eight hours	...	,, 4	
For each boatman	...	,, 8	(full day.)
To Nasim, Nishat or Shalimar Bagh and back ...	...	,, 4	
Each boatman ...	...	,, 6	

The fare for the single journey only is the same.

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Halts of over three hours must be paid for at half the hourly rates.

Travelling.

1. Travellers should take all transport and supplies with them, and they may not demand facilities except at places where proper arrangements exist for supplying them.

2. Ladies intending to travel alone should give previous notice of their proposed journey to the Assistant Resident and a detailed list of their servants to the Director, Visitors' Bureau.

3. Tahsildars will usually require from 24 to 48 hours' notice before coolies or ponies for transport can be supplied. If large numbers are required, several days' notice should be given.

4. The usual rate for ordinary stages in the valley is 4 annas for a coolie and 8 annas for a pony.

5. When halts are made during a journey half rates are payable for each whole day's halt.

6. The maximum coolie load is 25 seers and for a pony 2½ maunds.

7. Travellers, and not the owners of vehicles are responsible for the payment of tolls.

8. Limits of Travel :—

(*a*) In the Gilgit direction : Gurais, unless special permission has been obtained.

(*b*) In the direction of Leh, Suru, and Zaskar : Kargil, unless a special pass has been obtained, either from the Game Office, or the Assistant Commissioner for Leh.

(*c*) No one may cross the Kashmir frontier, except into British India, without the permission of the Government of India.

(*d*) No one may enter the Gilgit Agency, including Chilas, without the permission of the Resident.

(*e*) Ladies are not permitted to proceed beyond the Burzil or Kamri passes.

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9. On the road to, and at Leh there are rest-houses at each stage, which may be used on payment of one rupee per head per night.

10. The Assistant Commissioner for Ladakh resides in Srinagar from November to May and at Leh for the remainder of the year. All information regarding Ladakh and the districts beyond is obtainable from him.

11. At Sonamarg there is a Government contractor, who is responsible for all supplies there, and everything must be obtained through him and not from the villagers direct.

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APPENDIX TWO.

Summary of Shooting Rules.

These rules apply to all visitors, residents and officials of either sex. They apply to the whole of Kashmir, including Baltistan, Ladakh, Kishtwar and Astor, except certain small areas which have been reserved as the private shooting grounds of local Rajahs, and a number of rukhs, or State game preserves and sanctuaries.

A. General.

NOTE.—Lists of rukhs, blocks and reserved nullahs have been omitted as they are altered from time to time. The latest details should be obtained from the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, Srinagar.

1. No one may shoot in any rukh without the permission of the Durbar.

2. No one may shoot in Jammu, except in the Kishtwar Tahsil, without the permission of the Durbar.

3. No one may enter or shoot in any sanctuary, or in any area reserved for the residents of Srinagar without permission from the Secretary, Game Preservation Department.

4. Special rules apply, q.v.i., to the following districts :—

(*a*) The Astor Tahsil.
(*b*) The Kaj-i-Nag and Kafir Kund including Mozi and the Shemshibri.
(*c*) Ladakh, including Changchenmo.

5. No shooting is permitted on H. H. the Maharajah's birthday.

6. Driving game is prohibited, except :—

(*a*) For bears, leopards and pigs between 15th March and 30th September.
(*b*) Between 15th March and 15th November inclusive, the above animals may be driven in those hills open for shooting on the south side of the valley between Vernag and Baramulla.

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7. Except with the previous permission of the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, which will not ordinarily be granted, no female animals, except pig, serow, gural, musk deer, black bear, brown bear (without cubs), leopard and snow leopard may be shot.

8. Shooting yak is totally prohibited.

9. Shooting musk deer is forbidden except with a special license, which costs Rs. 50.

10. No ibex may be shot within the catchment area of the valley of Kashmir.

11. Serow may not be shot between the Chashma Shahi and Dachigam Rukhs.

12. Brown bears may not be shot in the Kaj-i-Nag, Liddar valley, Trat, Nawboog, or in the Bringi or Sind valleys.

13. Barking deer, monkeys and herons may not be shot.

14. No skins or horns of any animals, nor the pods of musk deer, may be sold, except in certain circumstances the skins of black bear and leopards.

15. Any person not subject to the jurisdiction of the Kashmir State courts, *i.e.*, any European visitor, who commits an offence against any of these rules, or against any of the special rules applying to particular districts, shall forfeit his weapons, license and trophies and his case shall be reported to the Resident for disposal.

16. None of the undermentioned animals may be shot with horns, or antlers smaller than the measurements noted against each :—

Markhor	...	... 45 inches.
Ibex ...	...	... 35 ,,
Ovis Ammon	...	... 38 ,,
Sharpu	...	... 24 ,,
Burrhel	...	... 23 ,,
Tibetan Antelope	...	... 22 ,,
Tibetan Gazelle	...	... 10 ,,
Kashmir Stag	...	... 35 ,, (measured from behind along the outside curve).

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Shikaris are held equally responsible if animals under these limits are shot.

17. All shooting after dark is prohibited.

18. A full report must be sent to the Game Preservation Department regarding any serious injuries received by any shikari or other person employed by any sportsman.

19. CLOSE SEASONS.

Chukor ...	... 1st March to 30th September.
Partridges and Pheasants	1st March to 21st September.
Geese, Duck and Teal	... 15th April to 15th September.
Snipe ...	... 1st April to 31st August.
Ram Chukor	... 2nd May to 15th September.
Kashmir Stag	... 15th March to 14th September.

20. The undernoted areas are reserved for residents and officials in Srinagar :—

1. Achhabal.
2. The Chatargul nullah in the Sind valley.
3. The Dara basin.
4. The Khanmoo basin, excluding the rukh.
5. The Wangat nullah in the Sind valley.
6. Uri nullah.
7. The Pampur and adjoining jhils.
8. Mir Gund jhil.

NOTE.—These areas may not be booked more than one month in advance. Guns are limited to three and permits to shoot in each area are issued once a fortnight. These permits are for fixed dates only and must be shown to the watcher when requested.

B. Licenses.

NOTE.—No game may be shot without a license. Licenses are not transferable.

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LICENSE No. 1. The undernoted number of animals may be shot in the districts open to sport between 15th March and 15th November in any one year :—

Markhor, of any variety ...	2	Tibetan Gazelle	1
Ibex, of which only two in Ladakh ...	3	Kashmir Stag	2
Sharpu ...	2	Serow ...	1
Ovis Ammon	2	Brown Bear ...	2
Burrhel ...	4	Tahr ...	4
Tibetan Antelope	3	Gural ...	4

also small game, Pigs, Black Bears and Leopards without limit. Price, Rs. 125.

LICENSE No. 2. Black Bears, Leopards and Pigs between 15th March and 15th November in any one year. Price, Rs. 40.

LICENSE No. 3. The undernoted number of animals may be shot in the districts open to sport between 15th November and 14th March in any one winter :—

Markhor, any variety	2	Kashmir Stag ...	1
Ibex ...	2	Serow ...	1
Sharpu ...	2	Tahr ...	3
Burrhel	3	Brown Bear	2
Tibetan Antelope	3	Gural ...	3
Tibetan Gazelle	1		

also small game, Pigs, Black Bears and Leopards without limit. Price, Rs. 75

LICENSE No. 4. Permits holders, subject to certain conditions, to shoot the undernoted animals between 16th November and 14th March :—

In Baltistan, and below Khalsi on the Indus, 2 Ibex and 2 Sharpu.

Above Khalsi on the Indus, 2 Sharpu and 2 Burrhel.

In Astor, 4 Sharpu.

In Gurais, 1 Ibex, 1 Brown Bear, 2 Black Bears.

Price, Rs. 20

These licenses are strictly limited in number and are issued in special cases only.

N.B.—Licenses numbers three and four cannot be held by one person at the same time.

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LICENSE No. 5*a*. Permits the holder to shoot small game only during the open season, but not to enter any forest or jungle inhabited by big game, or under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department. Price, Rs. 50.

LICENSE No. 5*b*. Is the same as number five/*a*, but is valid for a period of two months only. Price, Rs. 30

LICENSE No. 5*c*. Is the same as number five/*a*, but it permits the holder to use punt guns. Price, Rs. 50

LICENSE No. 6. Permits the holder to shoot one Musk Deer, or the holder of licenses number one or three to shoot one extra of any one of the animals referred to therein, excepting Markhor, Ovis Ammon or Tibetan Gazelle. Price, Rs. 50

NOTES.

1. Quail shooting is free.
2. Holders of any of these licenses may kill pigs on the left bank of the Jhelum above Srinagar and on both banks below, and leopards, wolves, foxes and other vermin.
3. No person may take out at one time more than one of each of these licenses.
4. Anyone who accidentally kills any animal in excess of the number permitted by his license, will be required to take out a number six license for each animal so killed.
5. Number two license may be changed for number one, or number five/*a* for either number one or number three, or number five/*b* for number five/*a* on payment of the difference, but no other exchanges will be allowed and no refunds will be made.
6. No shikari may take regular service until he has been registered and has been granted a license by the Secretary, Game Preservation Department. Employers should insist on these licenses being produced.
7. The employment of local shikaris in their own district is recommended, but any such shikari should have his name sent to the Secretary for registration, so that he may be made subject to the same penalties as the regular shikaris.
8. Records are kept by the Secretary of all exceptional heads shot in Kashmir and sportsmen should send any exceptionally large heads to him for measurement and entry in the records.

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9. Old heads are frequently palmed off on sportsmen as those of animals they have wounded. A head brought in after some time should only be accepted if there is no doubt whatever that it is the head of the animal actually wounded.

10. In no circumstances should a rifle be handed over to a shikari with which to follow a wounded animal, nor should a reward be offered for its recovery, as such practices are direct inducements to poaching.

11. License holders are requested to return their licenses after expiry and to notify the number of each species of animal shot by them.

C. Special Rules for the Kafir Kund and the Kaj-i-Nag.

1. This area includes the range of mountains and all offshoots between Baramulla and Domel, the watershed of which is drained by the rivers Pohru, Jhelum, Ginger and Kishengunga.

2. The shooting season for markhor is divided into two parts, namely, from 15th April to 14th July and from 15th July to 15th October. The remainder of the year is the close season.

3. Six guns are permitted to shoot in each period; each is allotted a particular nullah according to priority of application and in this nullah only may markhor be shot.

4. Sportsmen are permitted to march to and occupy their nullahs on and after the 10th of April and the 10th of July, respectively, on the understanding that they will not begin to shoot before the 15th of the month.

5. Licenses for the first period will only be granted on arrival of the applicants in Kashmir. Applications for the second period may be made in advance from any place after the 1st of January and will be dealt with according to the order in which they are received.

6. A limited number of sportsmen holding winter licenses are permitted to shoot big game, other than markhor and red bear, and also small game in this district between 15th November and 14th March.

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7. The Shemshibri range is subject to the ordinary game rules.

8. Shooting red bears is not allowed in the Kaj-i-Nag or the Kafir Kund, but is permitted in the Shemshibri.

D. Special Rules for the Astor District.

1. The Astor district is the catchment area of the streams flowing from the Kamri and Burzil passes to their junction above Astor. Beyond this the catchment area of the streams flowing into the Astor river on both banks to its junction with the Indus at Ramghat. All nullahs below Ramghat are closed as this is Chilas territory. Above Ramghat, the nullahs on the left bank of the Indus as far as the Gilgit river, and above this the country on both banks as far as the village of Bulatchi and the camping ground at Shangus are also closed.

2. In view of the serious political objections against entering Chilas, sportsmen are warned that they must not cross, or even approach, the watershed in the direction of Chilas territory.

If any inconvenience occurs through the disobeyment of this order the whole area now open will be closed.

3. Mir Malik is reserved for the garrison at Gilgit.

4. The routes leading into Astor from Foalwein and Rheyl through Mir Malik are closed.

5. Sportsmen must bring with them all their transport from Kashmir, as none is available in Astor. If extra transport is required, application should be made, stating the reasons, to the Political Agent at Gilgit. The Durbar officials are forbidden to act upon any application for transport, and all sportsmen must sign a statement that they will take with them all transport and supplies.

6. No ladies are permitted to proceed beyond the Kamri and Burzil passes.

7. No demands for stores belonging to the Supply and Transport Department can be met and, though every effort will be made by the authorities to furnish supplies, none can be guaranteed.

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8. The bazaars at Astor and Bunji may be able to furnish supplies and meat for followers at the local rates, but the quantity is very limited. If any supplies are available and the villagers are willing to sell, sportsmen are requested to see that all payments are made in their own presence.

9. After entering Astor European sportsmen are subject to the same rules as in other parts of the State, except the Political Agent, Gilgit, exercises the powers that are elsewhere vested in the Resident.

10. No shikari, except those approved of by the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, and sanctioned by the Political Agent in Gilgit, will be permitted to enter Astor.

Particulars of local shikaris can be obtained from the Tahsildars at Gurais and Astor and the Naib Tahsildar at Bunji.

11. The Astor shooting season is divided into two parts : 15th April to 14th July and 15th July to 15th October.

Permits for the first period will be granted by priority of application on arrival in Kashmir. Applications for the second period may be made in advance on or after 1st January, and are granted in the order of their receipt.

12. Ten guns are allowed in each period, but six only are permitted to shoot markhor. Each of these six guns is allotted a particular nullah, in accordance with priority of application, and in this nullah only may markhor be shot.

13. Any of the ten guns may shoot ibex, sharpu and red bear in the nullahs flowing into the Kamri river, except Mir Malik, and those on the left bank of the Astor river below Astor, and on both banks of the river above Astor.

14. The shooting season for small game in Astor is from 1st September to the last day of February.

15. Sportsmen are warned that coolies cannot be forced to cross the Burzil pass during March and April. If they are willing to volunteer, they must be paid 10 annas a march from Minimarg to Chillum Chowki. Arrangements should be left to the coolies themselves, as they

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are acquainted with the difficulties of the road and the conditions that are likely to be met.

16. The date of the permit is the date on which the holder is permitted to leave Bandipur. Travellers may start at intervals of not less than two days, and they must not lessen the interval, nor pass each other on the road.

E. Special Rules for Ladakh.

1. All sportsmen must take with them a Ladakh permit issued by the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, on their signing a certificate that they have no intention of crossing the frontier into Chinese Turkestan or Tibet. The Ladakh District commences :—

(*a*) At Bot Kharbu.
(*b*) At the Chorbat pass.
(*c*) At the village of Hundar on the Shyok river.

N.B.—This rule applies to sportsmen only. If they wish their wives or other persons to accompany them, application for a special permit must be made to the British Joint Commissioner through the Secretary, Game Preservation Department.

2. The Ladakh season is divided into two parts :
from 15th April to 14th July,
and 15th July to 15th October,
and no shooting is permitted in either the ammon or sharpu blocks except during these periods.

3. Passes for the first period are issued by priority of application on arrival in Kashmir territory, passes for the second period by priority of application from any place on or after 1st January in each year.

4. Sportsmen, who have registered their names for the second period and who find themselves unable to proceed to Ladakh, are requested to inform the Secretary immediately so that their blocks may be allotted to other guns.

5. Except in special cases, guns for the first and second periods will not be permitted to enter Ladakh before the 15th April and 15th July, respectively.

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6. The number of guns allowed to shoot ammon and sharpu is eight and ten in each period, respectively. Of these, three in each period may shoot in the Changchenmo district.

7. Blocks are allotted by priority of application and each gun will be allotted one ammon block and one sharpu block.

8. Those permitted to shoot in the Changchenmo district may be granted an ammon block in addition.

9. The remaining sharpu blocks are available for other sportsmen by priority of application.

10. No sportsmen may shoot any species of game in a block allotted to another gun.

11. All the country not included in the blocks, except the Changchenmo, may be shot over by any sportsman holding a Ladakh permit.

12. Several of the ammon and sharpu blocks are always closed, but the following are open at present :—

For Ovis Ammon.

Nos. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 15.

For Sharpu.

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15 and 16.

13. Shooting sharpu is forbidden on the maidan lying to the north and south of the Treaty Road between Likir nullahs and Bazgo.

14. Sportsmen proceeding to Changchenmo should apply for a special "parwana" from the British Joint Commissioner, Ladakh, without which no transport will be obtainable to cross the Marsemik La.

15. Sportsmen are expressly forbidden to cross the frontier of Chinese Turkestan or Tibet without special permission from the Government of India, and the frontier villagers are strictly forbidden to provide transport beyond the limits of Kashmir territory.

16. Sportsmen proceeding to Ladakh should obtain from the Secretary a "parwana" to obtain transport and supplies.

17. Up to 1st May no official assistance will be given to obtain coolies to cross the Zoji La and sportsmen, therefore, will have to make their own arrangements.

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F. Special Rules

to be observed by those who have obtained permission from the Government of India to shoot in the Pamirs and the Thian Shan.

1. Sportsmen must not allow their shikaris to shoot, nor may they allo w their shikaris to take th ir rifles to follow wounded game.

2. Sportsmen are requested to pay personally for all supplies, as servants cannot be trusted to do so.

3. Sportsmen must on no account purchase heads or skins from the inhabitants.

4. Kashmiri shikaris or other servants may not be taken without the permission of the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, who will also arrange for local shikaris.

5. Not more than four ovis poli may be shot in the Pamirs.

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APPENDIX THREE.

Summary of Fishing Rules.

N.B.—These rules are liable to be altered from time to time and an application to the Game office for the latest edition should therefore be made.

1. For the purposes of these rules, which apply to the whole of the Kashmir province and to the Poonch river and its tributaries in the Jammu province, the waters open to fishing are defined as follows :—

(*a*) TROUT WATERS.—All waters stocked with Brown or Rainbow trout. No fishing in these waters is permitted without a special license and a permit, on which is shewn the water and period for which the license is issued.

(*b*) RESERVED WATERS.—All waters where fishing is only permitted under a special license and where rod and line and small casting nets are the only means of catching fish that may be employed.

(*c*) PROTECTED WATERS.—All other waters where fishing is permitted under a license, but where any recognised means of capturing fish may be employed.

N.B.—SANCTUARIES are waters where fishing, owing to religious or other reasons, is not permitted in any circumstances.

A list of the various waters and sanctuaries is obtainable from the Game Preservation Office, Srinagar.

2. Licenses.

(*a*) TROUT WATERS.—

For the season (1st April to 30th September)	...	... Rs. 150
For one week ...	...	... Rs. 25
For one day ...	...	... ,, 5

This license allows the holder to fish in "Reserved" and "Protected" waters also.

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(*b*) RESERVED WATERS.—

For one year	... Rs.	20
For ten days on the Poonch River	... ,,	20
For one year on the Poonch River	... ,,	30

(*c*) PROTECTED WATERS.—

For one year	... Rs.	4

NOTE 1.—The Rs. 30 Reserved waters license permits the holder to fish in Protected waters also.

NOTE 2.—A Protected waters license may be exchanged for a Reserved waters license on payment of the difference.

NOTE 3.—None of these licenses are transferable, nor may they be shared between two or more persons.

NOTE 4.—All licenses are issued by the Secretary, Game Preservation Department, except Protected waters licenses, which may also be issued by the Tahsildars of districts.

3. In all trout waters, except where otherwise stated, rod fishing with artificial, natural and dead bait only is permitted. Natural baits do not include worms or frogs, and artificial baits, though including all kinds of feathered lures, do not include any kind of spinner.

4. The number of trout that may be caught in any one day is limited to six and in any one week to twenty-four, except in one or two localities where the number is less. After catching this number the fisherman must stop fishing for trout for the remainder of the day or week, as the case may be.

5. All fish smaller than twelve inches must be returned, but smaller fish that are so badly hooked that they are unlikely to recover may be kept and not counted under rule four above.

6. Trout waters are defined for the purposes of booking as " Weekly " and " Daily " waters.

7. Trout waters may be booked provisionally at any time after the first of January. Provisional bookings for " weekly " waters will be cancelled if not confirmed within one month from the date of the commencement of the period. Provisional bookings for " daily " waters

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will be cancelled if not confirmed within two days from the date of booking.

8. Sportsmen should send in suggestions or complaints regarding Trout waters to the Secretary, Game Preservation Department.

9. Once a fishing is booked no refunds can be given for any reason.

10. Sub-letting of booked waters is not permitted except in the case of "weekly" waters. Any sub-letting that can be arranged will be undertaken by the Game Preservation Department.

11. Sportsmen are requested to enter details of the fish they kill in the Record Book kept for all waters, giving also the size of the largest fish killed.

12. Sportsmen are requested not to employ any other than local shikaris. If for any reason a shikari from some other locality is employed, a local shikari should be employed in addition. These local shikaris render great assistance to the Game Preservation Department in the up-keep of the streams and they deserve consideration on this account.

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